

**LOVE IN THE UPPER REACHES OF HUMAN POSSIBILITY:
A PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL EXPLORATION**

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ABSTRACT

Love in the Upper Reaches of Human Possibility:

A Psycho-spiritual Exploration

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This dissertation project is an inquiry into the possibilities for the maturation of human love. Issues addressed are: (1) Can human persons grow in their ability to love? (2) What are the factors which contribute to the growth of love? (3) What are the developmental changes in the maturation of love? (4) What are the characteristics of love in the upper reaches of human possibility? (5) What is the relationship of human love to Divine Love.

The method of research includes: (1) a substantive review of the literature in order to gain some insight into the human understanding of love; (2) in-depth personal interviews with nineteen persons having a well-developed ability to verbalize information from their subjective feelings, memories, values, beliefs and spiritual experience; (3) analysis of the research data using the Glaser and Strauss method of grounded theory for coding and cataloging the material; and (4) interpretation and conclusions, for theory building.

Indications of research data: (1) all interviewees report maturation in their ability to love; (2) all interviewees express belief in some form of Divine reality; (3) eight interviewees believe the authentic experience and expression of the true

essential Self is directly related to the ability to love; (4) interviewees identify common factors contributing to maturation including: self-honesty, integration of the shadow self, love of self, openness to Grace; (5) characteristics of love in the upper reaches are identified in the interviewees including: expansion of the boundaries of love to include more of the created order, increasing empathy and compassion for others, appreciative consciousness, desire for justice, freedom to follow an inner guide, refinement of perception, growth in authenticity and self-honesty, and openness to the infusion of Divine Love.

A preliminary theory of the psycho-spiritual development of love is suggested and three basic stages are identified: (1) the ego-centric stage in which the ego is immature, self-seeking; (2) the transitional stage in which the ego is gradually superseded by the true essential Self; (3) the efflorescent stage in which the capacity for love in the true essential Self is increased. This theory holds that one may grow in ability to love through self-understanding, through authentic expression of the true essential Self and through cooperation with Grace.

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Preface

This dissertation evolves from a life-long observation and a question. The observation is the tragedy of a wounded world suffering from the deprivation of love; the question is: why do we not love one another more fully, thereby transforming our world?

In the late sixties a bumper sticker provided a first clue that the answer lay within the human heart. "If you want to make change in the world, start with yourself." But how does one transform one's own heart? As one of many who have journeyed the trail of self-actualization can attest, transforming the human heart by human effort can lead to disappointment. My experience of the futility of personal effort led in time to the recognition that in the Divine lies the secret and fullness of life and love. The motivating interest underlying this study is the experience of others in their journey toward authentic love in the upper reaches of human possibility.

In order to research the relationship between human love and the Divine, interviewees were sought who: (1) were recognized for their ability to love in the upper reaches; (2) had a spiritual or theistic orientation to life; and (3) were able to give verbal expression to their in-depth psychological and spiritual processes.

INTRODUCTION

Some day, after we have mastered the winds, the tides and gravity, we will harness for God the energies of love; and then for the second time in history, man will have discovered fire!¹

General Statement

The subject of this dissertation is love in the higher reaches of human possibility and its relationship to spiritual experience. The problem to be addressed is the general ignorance of such love and the dynamics by which it is fostered. That love is rarely the basis of human life is not only a sadness but an indictment of our human accomplishment and progress. The hope here is to add to our knowledge of unconditional love as it grows in human persons so that religious educators may be better able to encourage, nurture and teach the experience and expression of love. The search is both in literature and in the living experience of human beings who in the course of their lives have known and demonstrated the human capacity for love.

The search that begins this study leads into the deep inner nature of the human person. Until humanity better understands the human ability to love, one cannot hope to build a more loving world, for the world will be no more loving than the people in it. In designing a research study based on love, the writer realized from

¹ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, On Love and Happiness (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1967), 16.

the beginning the difficulty of exploring the territory of the psyche and designing an empirical approach for such an elusive subject. This book is but an attempt, therefore, to add to the continuing symposium on love that was begun by Plato.

That love remains a mystery is acknowledged. The understandings of love range from culture to culture, from age to age, from person to person. One speaks of loving ice cream, of loving one's children, of romantic love, of immature and mature love. What then is love?

Life-nourishing love is the many splendored thing which can neither be fully embraced nor confined to an exact definition. From earliest times, humankind has sought to understand love's essence, but like a butterfly under a microscope, its essence is illusive. Love can be felt, but cannot be seen; can transform but cannot be trapped and analyzed. Love can happen in a moment, but that moment can nourish a lifetime. Love is most valuable, yet it cannot be purchased. Love cannot be depleted, for the more it is given, the more it is replenished. Love is vulnerable, without defense, yet strong enough to defeat death. Love is a product of both mind and heart, as it is at once wise and just, tender and compassionate. Love is beyond measure; no measuring tape can measure the presence and extent of love. A droplet of love can permeate the whole. Love can suffer the deepest pain and know the greatest joy. Love is eternal, for the love from a grandparent can be felt by generations of grandchildren. Love has no favorites, neither pauper nor prince. Love forms the strongest bonds, but requires total freedom. Love is powerless to injure, powerful to heal.

Why then has love, as powerful, infinite and eternal as it is, not transformed the world? Throughout history humankind has sought the "holy grail," the "pearl of great value," "the secret of life." Perhaps humankind has relied upon reason and empirical science to provide the secrets of life. Reason and science have built megacities, split the atom, landed on the moon, discovered the laser and brought forth the technological computer age. Although reason and science have provided much valuable and healing knowledge, can they alone solve human needs? When will we seek to explore the width, breadth and depth of love? The creative and powerful mind that is not tempered by love and compassion is capable of the greatest evil, as Hitler proved. Learning to expand the consciousness of one's mind is a worthy pursuit. But the belief here is that ultimately the secret of life is to be found in the heart, the symbolic fountain of love, and that human fulfillment and peace result from the union of reason and love. The following thesis has evolved as a result of the continuing search for greater understanding of the dynamics and experience of love.

Thesis Statement

In loving at the higher reaches of human possibility, persons experience love not as originating solely from within their human center but from a source that they believe to be an ultimate, transcendental, divine source. The purpose of this dissertation, therefore, is to explore the following questions: (1) What are the

characteristics of human love in its fullest lived dimension? (2) What is the role of a person's spiritual experience of the Transcendental Divine (God) in maturing the capacity for loving? (3) How is spiritual experience correlated with the quality of a person's love toward self, others, enemies, the sick, the unlovable, nature, and God? and (4) How can religious education enhance a person's maturation in love?

Love at the higher reaches is that love which humans live in their finest moments. It is a pure love that transcends self-service and ego-centeredness, and opens persons to the presence, the mystery, the need of the other. It can be observed in the sacrificial living of a Mother Teresa, in the quiet heroism of a father descending daily into the coal mines, in the dedicated work of a composer writing a concerto.

Spiritual experience, according to William James, is "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men [persons] in their solitude, so far as they stand in relationship to whatever they may consider Divine."² The Divine, due to the limitation of language and human consciousness, cannot be adequately defined, for the Divine that is defined is surely not the Divine. The Divine can be known only by its effects and through experience. The Divine points toward the universal, personal, unconditional, creative and tender impulses that call persons to unity, wholeness and fullness of life. James says that the Divine is "a primal reality that the individual feels

² William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (New York: Longmans, Green, 1902), 30.

impelled to respond to solemnly and gravely."³ Alister Hardy, who studied 3,000 cases of religious experiences in 1979, affirms, with James, the human experience of a transcendental reality, and a sense of presence and personalization relative to a "higher" universe.⁴

General Design of Dissertation

This investigative study into love in the upper reaches of human possibility is divided into three basic divisions. The first division, a review of the literature, is for the purpose of studying some of the extensive literature on love in order better to comprehend the state of present human understanding. The review includes a sampling of philosophical, theological, psychological and sociological writings on love, as well as scientific theories that influence the human concept of love. The appendix offers both a bibliography and an annotated bibliography of selected works.

The second division of this project is the in-depth interviews, which investigate the subjective experience of persons maturing into the upper reaches of human loving and the relationship of maturation to the Divine. The purpose of this is to gain insight into the possibility of human maturation in the ability to love, and to study the interviewees' perceptions, motivations and values as maturation takes place.

³ James, 38.

⁴ Bernard Spilka, Ralph Hood Jr., and Richard Gorsuch The Psychology of Religion (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1983), 155.

The third division is the analysis of the data from taped and transcribed interviews in order to discover major themes, common words, symbols and patterns in interviewee experience. A method of separating the material into selected categories is explained in Chapter 4. The analysis forms the basis of the researcher's conclusions in Chapters 8 and 10.

Rationale of Study

The problem is the fallibility and the lack of human love. Everywhere one can find the victims of fallible human love: the wounded who can neither laugh nor cry, those isolated in some inner, walled garrison who pretend that life is real and fill it with meaningless experience. These victims of heart pain stand side by side with the starving and the war-ravaged. All suffer the deprivation and the fallibility of human love.

Evidence shows that babies denied love can die,⁵ that children raised in loveless institutions have difficulty forming loving relationships later in life,⁶ and that all humans have a deep need for love and belonging.⁷ Carl Rogers believes love is

⁵ G.W. Goldfarb, "Emotional and Intellectual Consequences of Psychological Deprivation in Infancy," Psychopathology of Childhood, eds. P. Hock and G. Lubin (New York: Green and Stratton, 1955), 105-19.

⁶ John Bowlby, "Attachment and Loss," Attachment, vol. 1 (New York: Basic Books, 1969).

⁷ Ronald H. Forgas and Bernard H. Shulman, Personality: A Cognitive View (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1979).

"unconditional positive regard" and is essential to the development of a healthy personality; he says that a child's behavior comes to be guided "not by the degree to which an experience maintains or enhances the organism, but by the likelihood of receiving . . . love."⁸ In significant studies with infant monkeys, Harry Harlow discovered that baby monkeys denied contact do not develop normally. Such monkeys become withdrawn, inhibited, frightened and unable to respond to other monkeys. Unless they are treated early, these become permanent behavioral patterns.⁹

The assumption of this study is that the subject of love is the most critical subject confronting humankind. Unless human persons learn to live in loving relationship with themselves, one another, the environment, and the Divine, they are destined to perpetuate a world in which humans are isolated from one another and live in fear and diminutive life.

This study further argues that until the human possibilities for loving have been explored, humankind has no adequate vision of possibilities. Until the full state of loving can be described, there is no target by which to set an aim. How can one aspire to grow in love if one has no understanding of what love is or of love's possibilities? Dreams and visions are the guides by which the course is set. Without

⁸ Carl R. Rogers, "A Theory of Therapy, Personality, and Interpersonal Relationships as Developed in the Client-centered Framework," Psychology: The Study of Science, vol. 3 of Formulations of the Person and the Social Context, ed. S. Koch (New York: McGraw Hill, 1959), 184-256.

⁹ Harry F. Harlow, Learning to Love (New York: Aronson, 1974).

an understanding of love's potentiality it is unlikely that culture in general will put full energies into its development. Humanity will therefore remain in the elementary level of knowledge.

Abraham Maslow says:

It's amazing how little the empirical sciences have to offer on the subject of love . . . love is an extraordinarily difficult subject to handle in any tradition and it is triply so in the scientific situation . . . [yet] our duty is clear here. We must understand love: we must be able to teach it, to create it, to predict it, or else the world is lost to hostility and to suspicion.¹⁰

As a realization that love is critical to a suffering world, this study was devised to explore the relationship between the individual, his/her environment, the Divine Principle of Life (God) and the ability to love.

Love as a Unifying Principle

The subject of love is a challenge for the disciplines, including psychology, sociology, philosophy and theology. Psychologists attempt to understand the neurotic inhibitions to the flow of love and to discover ways of freeing the inner self from bondage. Sociologists study the way people live together in community with the ultimate purpose of discovering how human persons can live the richer experience of mutual love. Philosophers search for the ultimate meaning of life, which they might discover to be love. Theologians look at love from the perspective of a loving

¹⁰ Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 181.

Creator who calls the created into a life which expresses love. Perhaps love could be seen as a unifying principle for all these disciplines.

Love as a Subject for Religious Education

The subject of love is critical to religious education. All religious education is concerned with the transmission of religious truths and the translation of values and principles into living experience. Love is the foundational truth of the great religions. The Torah teaches, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut. 6:5) and, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev. 19:18). Jesus Christ made these the only commandments. The Talmud teaches that the love of God is the beginning and end of the Torah. The Koran teaches that perfect peace comes from love and surrender to God. Ramakrishna, a Hindu, taught that the love of God is the essence of all spiritual discipline, and St. John, in one of the most profound and enlightened statements in religious history, said, "God is love," and "he who abides in love abides in God" (1 John 4:16). Love as taught by all these great religions is the ultimate solution for human suffering. In these days of a suffering and broken world, the teaching of love is the great challenge for religious education.

Ashley Montagu says:

The most important thing to realize about the nature of human nature is that the most significant ingredient in its structure is love. The church has long recognized this; scientists are beginning to realize it; but it will be the educators of the world to whom the task will fall not

only of explaining the nature of love, but of teaching its meaning to the citizens of future generations. When that time arrives, we shall for the first time in the history of the western world have truly educated human beings among us.¹¹

Bowlby, Goldfarb and Harlow have demonstrated that life without love is diminished and can lead to illness and death. Even the earth without love and care is violated and debilitated. But is fallible human love the only human possibility? Daniel Day Williams asks the critical question: "Is there a love other than man's and if so what difference does it make?"¹²

According to Williams, our Western concept of love has been forged in the crucible of our Western Judeo-Christian culture. This concept holds that "fulfillment of love cannot come from ourselves or our own will. It must come from God."¹³ Theologians of the Christian tradition such as Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin and John Wesley agree that the human person is not the originator and generator of love and that the process of the maturation of love into its fullest expressions is a cooperative process with Grace. Gerald May, a psychiatrist who has studied human depth psychology, concurs, saying, "Agape love is ultimate, unconditional love."¹⁴ He adds, "Agape love does not have its origin in the individual human psyche."¹⁵

¹¹ Ashley Montagu, ed., introduction to The Meaning of Love (New York: Julian Press, 1953), 22.

¹² Daniel Day Williams, The Spirit and the Forms of Love (Washington, D.C: University Press of America, 1981), 1.

¹³ Williams, 3.

¹⁴ Gerald May, Will and Spirit (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982), 128.

¹⁵ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 168.

A Holistic Approach to Human Behavior

Love cannot be understood if one separates mind, heart and body. Yet the scientific approach tends to dissect the human person into individualized and highly differentiated parts. The human person is rarely studied in a holistic sense, which would include not only the physical dimension but also the dimensions of emotion, intellect and spirit. Nor is the human person studied within a social context of relationships with other human persons within a community, a family, a nation or the world. Because the tendency is to study the isolated parts instead of the whole, the human person is rarely seen as an active entity within a historical, cultural, spiritual field. To understand love adequately, one must study the whole person and his/her social context.

If the assumption can be made, as this study does, that a person has a spiritual dimension, then the conclusion can be reached that love cannot be understood in its fullest measure unless the spiritual dimension of the human person is actively studied.

For purposes of clarifying terminology as used here, the spiritual realm refers to the underlying mysterious invisible dimension of the created order. The spiritual realm is underlying because it includes all reality, both relationships with others and the environment in the material realm, and relationship with a higher transcendent order of reality in the non-material realm. Spirituality refers to "the sensing,

absorbing, expressing and shaping of the awareness of God."¹⁶ A person experiences the mysterium of universal reality (God) through the center of intuitive knowing, which can be non-conceptual or learned. In spiritual terminology, the heart is the spiritual seat of wisdom and intelligence. Because this is a subjective study, attention will be directed toward the personal in-depth side of spiritual experience.

This study is subtitled A Psycho-spiritual Exploration because if the inner depths of the human psyche are to be investigated, the investigator must be open-minded to the possibility of a spiritual influence. Secular, academic, empirical and behavior oriented psychology has largely ignored the realm of internal, subjective experience, including spiritual experience. Consequently, human knowledge has been diluted and restricted. The psychology of religion is one discipline that has done pioneering work on religious life and spiritual experience. It is to be hoped other branches of psychology will recognize the vast realm of possibility that the spiritual dimension offers and will open more psychological exploration into the spiritual realm. This will require courage, humility and a willingness to accept a higher order of intelligence.

Gerald May discusses contemplative psychology as offering psychology a spiritual dimension in which the intuitive level of the human psyche can be studied. He says that "the goal of a contemplative psychology is not the separate autonomy of the individual but the realization of one's essential rootedness in God and

¹⁶ John Byrom, "Reading, Spiritual," The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality, ed. Gordon S. Wakefield. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 331.

relatedness in creation."¹⁷ Psychology, he believes, has been unyielding and inflexible in its refusal to join religion and philosophy in a search to understand the human spiritual state. He suggests this omission is due to a basic fear that the positivistic approach of the behavioral sciences must eventually yield their egocentric concept of human behavior to a recognition of the truths of spiritual traditions. Spiritual traditions teach of an ultimate mystery which underlies all of life and "can be experienced, sensed, felt, appreciated, even loved without being understood."¹⁸

Chapter 1 discusses this relationship between human love and the spiritual dimension of human experience. This chapter explores the historical and evolutionary understanding of human love, considers love from several philosophical, sociological, psychological and theological perspectives and offers an operational understanding of human and Divine Love.

¹⁷ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 27.

¹⁸ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 30.

Chapter 1

The Search for a Definition of Love

Love is perhaps the most widely used and the least understood word in human language. As stated earlier, love is a word beyond a fully adequate definition. One can describe its many splended facets and yet must always conclude, "Yes, but there is still more than this." To define love is like trying to catch a moonbeam. Still, for purposes of communication and to offer a historical perspective, this study reviews a sampling of the many contributions to the symposium on love in order to find an operational definition.

Samplings from Early Greek Perspectives

The early Greeks understood a spiritual realm as part of reality. Plato discussed the realm of perfect ideals, and Greek mythology was resplendent with tales of the antics of gods and goddesses. The Greeks also explored the meanings of love. They identified what they believed to be different experiences of love. They defined narcissistic love as excessive adulation and concern for the self. In the myth, Narcissus is captivated by his own image reflected in the water. Narcissism is generally regarded as infantile, ego-centeredness in which the self has an obsessive

interest in receiving. Relationships are manipulated and valued for their ability to serve the self, not for their intrinsic value. Today psychology views narcissistic love as unhealthy self-love. Healthy or authentic self-love, in contrast, is that love which respects the self and nurtures growth.

The natural warm affection for family and others in a familiar relationship was called storage in ancient Greece. Storage explained the attachment of parents for children and of persons in a close environment to one another. It provided a sense of belonging and security. Erik Erikson holds that this affection and value for the infant within the family is essential to the development of basic trust. Trust is the foundation upon which an individual understands the created order as friendly and affirming.¹ The affection for members of a household or family builds a sense of confidence and strengthens the individuals to extend their boundaries by going out into the world.

The Greeks identified filial love as friendship or the bond of care between equals and between parents and child. It is understood as a relationship that includes giving as well as receiving, in which both individuals are enlarged by its presence. Filial love is loyal, and concerned with the well-being of the other. It can extend out to others as in a brother- or sister-hood.

¹ Erik Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle (New York: International Universities Press, 1959), 57-67.

Eros is the term given to the creative urge which seeks a state of union. Rollo May points out that we limit the Greek concept when we consider Eros to be only sexual desire. He says:

Eros is the drive toward union with what we belong to--union with our own possibilities, union with significant other persons in our world in relation to whom we discover our own self-fulfillment. Eros is the yearning in man which leads him to dedicate himself to seeking Arete, the noble and good life."²

Anders Nygren disagrees with this fundamental meaning of eros. He believes that eros is a self-serving drive to possess and control the object of the desire. According to Philip Watson, Nygren believes that "Eros is a love that loves to get, a highly refined form of self-interest and seeking. Therefore, it must be regarded as sinful."³ Nygren describes agape love as that unconditional love which is of God. He contrasts agape and eros, saying that eros as love was a concept of the Hellenistic world whereas agape as love was a concept of the New Testament. Eros pointed toward union, agape pointed toward surrender. Eros loves the beautiful and the good. Agape loves unconditionally both the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the evil. Eros is a self-seeking love that desires to get. Agape is a selfless love that desires to give.

Nygren holds that both the Hellenistic and Judaic motifs are egocentric religions in which the fundamental concern is the human person. Only the Christian

² Rollo May, Love and Will (New York: Norton, 1969), 75.

³ Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros, trans. Philip Watson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), xxi.

motif is theocentric in that salvation comes through Divine Grace and not through human effort.

For May, eros is the dynamic of passion, the spirit of life, which yearns for its fullest expression. For Nygren eros is that desire which turns the human person from God to self, and needs to be united with agape.

Agape as understood by Nygren is that unconditional love, that self-giving that seeks no return. Agape is the love that loves because that is all that it can do. It loves all equally regardless of position, of abilities and accomplishments. In Christian motifs agape love is that perfect, universal love which is attributed to God, and becomes the model for all human love.

Paul Tillich understands eros in a way similar to Rollo May. He says that in "Aristotle we find the doctrine of the universal eros which drives everything towards the highest form, the pure actuality which moves the world not as a cause but as the object of life."⁴ He defines love as " . . . the drive towards the unity of the separated."⁵ Love is that power to unite what was once united but is now estranged. The human person is estranged from the self, from others, and from the Divine. For Tillich, love is not emotion and does not exist as different types. He believes that the attempt to contrast agape and eros is a misrepresentation of eros with epithymia (sensual desire). Eros is the yearning to seek and unite with values such as truth,

⁴ Paul Tillich, Love, Power and Justice (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 22.

⁵ Tillich, 25.

beauty, goodness. "Eros represents the transpersonal pole while philia represents the personal pole."⁶ Agape love comes from another dimension and is the ultimate reality which cuts into manifest reality and transforms life and love. Human love at its divine depth is transformed into divine love.⁷

Samplings from Philosophical Perspectives

Alfred N. Whitehead, one of the great twentieth-century philosophers who deeply respected the genius of Plato, once remarked that all subsequent philosophies are but footnotes to Plato. For Plato beauty, goodness, courage and love lie at the very center of reality. In the Symposium,⁸ Plato represents the power of love as running through all nature and all being. In speaking through Diotima, the prophetess of Mantinea, Plato says that Love is the mediator between "gods and men," for "God mingles not with man; but through Love all the intercourse and converse of God with man whether awake or asleep is carried on. The wisdom which understands this is spiritual: all other wisdom such as that of arts and handicrafts is mean and vulgar."⁹ Diotima teaches Plato that "Love is birth," a deep seeking for not only beauty and goodness, but for immortality. Immortality is attained by

⁶ Tillich, 33.

⁷ Tillich, 110.

⁸ Plato, Lysis, or Friendship, The Symposium, Phaedrus, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Norwalk, Conn.: Easton Press, 1979), 57-117.

⁹ Plato, 93.

generation, because "generation always leaves behind a new existence in the place of the old."¹⁰

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), a philosopher, was perhaps the father of contemporary existentialism. He is primarily concerned with existence, and he criticizes all philosophy and rational knowledge that exhorts a person "to think" rather than "to be." He is concerned not with being as such, for the sleeping person has being, but with the quality or value of being. Each person possesses an essential self, and the actualization of this self is the goal of existence. In the highest level of development one comes into relationship with God. Kierkegaard believes that God is love. According to him the life of love proceeds from the heart; love is the bond of the eternal and temporal.¹¹ Love is eternal; it is known by its fruit. Love builds up. Martin Heidegger, an existential philosopher, was concerned with authentic human existence. For him shallow, impersonal, conformist existence is unauthentic experience. This is experience in which others, the "they," dominate; one thinks, acts as others deem important; the genuine self is lost; there is a "leveling down" of the possibilities of being; authentic being is sacrificed to the group, to the "they." As one moves toward authenticity, concealments, obscurities, disguises are relinquished and the essential being is "illuminated" or disclosed.¹² Dasein is the term Heidegger uses

¹⁰ Plato, 99.

¹¹ Soren Kierkegaard, Works of Love (New York: Harper, Torchbooks, 1962), 24.

¹² Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 164-68.

for human being (being there). As Dasein becomes more free, it experiences an ecstasy that is born of openness to the possibilities for authentic being. Dasein moves toward authenticity by realizing its possibility and by making choices to be released from the illusions of the "they."

Martin Buber, a philosopher and teacher of Hasidism, is deeply concerned with the interpersonal side of human existence, and with authentic human existence. He believes that the fundamental human ability is to exist in relationship with the other, whether it be nature, persons or God. He says, "I contemplate a tree . . . and if will and grace are joined [then] as I contemplate the tree I am drawn into a relation, and the tree ceases to be an it."¹³ Buber teaches that the subjective I of the individual is always in relationship to someone or something else, that it does not exist in isolation. In this relationship, the I of the self can regard the other as an object to be used or manipulated. The other is not experienced as a living presence, a Divine Essence, a Thou, but is perceived as a thing. This relationship Buber calls the I-It relationship. In the I-Thou relationship the subjective I experiences itself while entering into conscious awareness of the presence, the Divine Essence of the other. The authentic presence of one touching the authentic presence of the other is a holy act of genuine encounter in which the boundaries of each are transcended and the essence of the other is known. Buber says, "The purpose of relation is the relation itself-touching the Thou. For as soon as we touch a Thou, we are touched

¹³ Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1970), 58.

by a breath of eternal life."¹⁴ It is only in genuine I-Thou encounter that love is possible.

Gabriel Marcel differs from Heidegger, who sees the individual becoming authentic as he/she becomes autonomous. Marcel holds that autonomy is a barrier to existential fulfillment. Authentic existence demands personal involvement. No person can find individual truth in isolation. In relationship one transcends egocentricity and becomes free. The true person realizes his/her solidarity and by his/her freedom chooses to love. The free person can enter into relationship. Marcel believes that in the context of hope and trust love comes into being. "To hope is to continue in communion and to win freedom to live in community outside the prison walls of isolated self-centeredness."¹⁵

William Sadler in Existence and Love reviews the existential phenomenology of philosophers Heidegger, Marcel and Buber and attempts to bring understanding to the distinctive nature of love as the fundamental structure of human existence.¹⁶ Sadler criticizes Heidegger for failing to develop the importance of relationships, but he criticizes Buber for failing to do justice to authentic individual existence.

Sadler, building on the work of these existential phenomenologists, presents a chapter entitled, "The Meaning of Love in the Stages of Life's Way." He believes that human ignorance and neglect of love have led to the human existential crisis.

¹⁴ Buber, 113.

¹⁵ Gabriel Marcel, The Existential Background of Human Dignity (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 113.

¹⁶ William Sadler, Existence and Love (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1969), 64-114.

Authentic human life does not mean to become "successfully productive, thoroughly secular, completely autonomous or radically socialized. The chief task of human life is to become personal, and the ground of personal existence is loving duality."¹⁷ By using the expression, "loving duality," Sadler is pointing to the coming together in love of two persons. Love is not an occasional happening but the fundamental structure of human existence. That this is not understood is our human tragedy.

Samplings from Sociological Perspectives

Reuben Fine, writing in The Meaning of Love in Human Experience,¹⁸ proposes the thesis that human beings are deeply influenced by their cultural environment and cultural heritage, and that there are two basic human cultures--the culture of love and the culture of hate. Further, he states that Western civilization since the time of the Greeks has been largely a hate culture. In substantiating this thesis he points to wars, famines, murders, genocide and slavery, all integral parts of human history. Love cultures have been studied and very few have existed in actuality. Several primitive tribes such as the Tasaday, Mangara and others, have been studied by anthropologists.¹⁹ Strangely, in some few primitive cultures love in child rearing and family relations prevails. The more highly developed cultures are

¹⁷ Sadler, 315.

¹⁸ Reuben Fine, The Meaning of Love in Human Experience (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1985)

¹⁹ Fine, 3-5.

basically hate cultures that fail to emphasize affection, tenderness and cooperation. In love cultures, aggression, which is universal, is dealt with in a manner that leaves the people relatively free of hostility. Because such cultures do exist, the possibility for humans to live in cooperation and love is demonstrated.

More widespread, however, are hate cultures where relationships are marked by hatred, antagonism and power struggle. Fine points to the Aztecs, warriors who practiced human sacrifice on a vast scale; to the Jivaro, Ecuadorians with a history of extreme violence; to Nazi Germany, whose hate was expressed in our time. Hate cultures are characterized by violence, killing and fear of death. Vengeance is omnipresent, women are devalued, negative emotions predominate.²⁰

Fine accuses historians of failing to bring out the unspeakable horrors found in ancient Greece and Rome. He says history highlights not the barbarism, massacres, enslavements, but only the accomplishments of these societies. Fine reveals also the horrors Christians perpetrated in the name of holy wars, crusades and murder of infidels and heretics.

To do away with evil without employing the mechanisms of evil seems to be a critical question for humanity. Neither religious, social, economic nor political reforms have been able to produce truly loving cultures. Fine suggests a psychological shift by means of education and counseling that would change hate cultures to love cultures. He says that the fullest flowering of love is possible only in a love culture. But he holds, along with anthropologist Ashley Montagu, that "love

²⁰ Fine, 5-40.

is deeply rooted biologically,"²¹ that there is within the infant not a tabula rasa, but a reaching being who seeks attachment.

Fine states that the psychoanalyst has become the most profound anthropologist of our culture. Hope for humanity lies in understanding the roots of hate in the human heart, the unconscious, irrational impulses that diminish and restrict reason and feeling, and the cultural conditions that encourage love or perpetuate hate. He defines love as "an affectionate feeling toward other people based on mutual reciprocity and functioning within a love culture."²² In order to move from a hate culture toward a love culture, we must bring hate into view for a full analysis.

Paul Ray, a noted sociologist doing research for Noetic Sciences Review on altruism in America, has developed a theory building on Max Weber's theory. Weber (a German sociologist) makes a distinction between actions that are "instrumentally rational" and those that are "value rational." Actions that are instrumentally rational are motivated from a perspective of self-interest. They are valuable in so far as they successfully accomplish the goals set by the individual. The essential question asked is, "What's in it for me?" This is the calculating, egoistic and self-centered approach to life's situations. In contrast, individuals who are value-rational operate from a different orientation. They see what is valuable in its own right, and seek to do that

²¹ Fine, 309.

²² Fine, 370.

which is most valuable with much less concern for the cost. Those values such as aesthetics, idealism, justice, ethics and morality become the center of concern.

Furthering this work, Ray suggests that there are four levels of altruism in social settings. "Each is more inclusive and mature than the earlier stages, and each shows a greater psychological maturity and consciousness."²³ The first two stages operate from an egoistic center in which the ego is the primary value. The first level, egoistic altruism, is egocentered and although it can affirm immediate family and friends, its motivation elicits from a need to satisfy and serve the ego. The second level, tribal altruism, includes wider boundaries such as one's group, one's own kind. It may involve giving to one's own, but it often creates enemies in those who are different, and the underlying purpose is the protection and enhancement of the ego. The third stage, mutualistic altruism, further extends the interpersonal boundaries, and a development takes place in mutual giving and receiving. This involves an appreciation for the human commonality of all people, and a growing understanding that others are like oneself. The motivation is to help others, to better the situation. The fourth stage, the most mature form, is creative altruism, which occurs when there is an intuition of wholeness and oneness. Many persons experience creative altruism in peak experiences, not as a constant level of consciousness, but as one which informs their life choices and daily actions. Creative altruists give from an open-heartedness that is overflowing into life. Such actions are self-renewing; the need to

²³ Paul Ray, "Altruism as Value-centered Action," Noetic Sciences Review 12 (Autumn 1989): 12.

blame diminishes, and one seeks to overcome divisions and to find both/and solutions to problems. In its highest forms this is the Karuna or love, pity, compassion of the Buddhist Buddhisattva ideal.

Scott Peck in his book, The Road Less Traveled, defines love as "the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth."²⁴ Peck goes on to ask where does love come from. He states that although "potentially influenced by human consciousness, the origin of the mechanisms of nurture are outside of the conscious will and beyond the process of conscious decision making." He believes that a powerful force originates outside of human consciousness and nurtures the spiritual growth of human beings.²⁵ Peck suggests that although we do not have a scientific method for measuring this force, it certainly cannot be ignored. He says, "I do not think we can hope to approach a full understanding of the cosmos, of the place of man within the cosmos, and hence the nature of mankind itself, without incorporating the phenomenon of grace into our conceptual framework."²⁶ Peck understands this force of creation to be the force which lies behind the process of evolution and growth. He believes that love is the way by which people evolve, and that the capacity to love is somehow breathed into us by that power underlying all creation.

²⁴ Scott Peck, The Road Less Traveled (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 268.

²⁵ Peck, The Road Less Traveled, 261.

²⁶ Peck, The Road Less Traveled, 261.

Viktor Frankl, a survivor of Nazi death camps and an existentialist, says that "love is the only way to grasp another human being in the innermost core of his personality."²⁷ The only way to truly know the essence of another is to love him/her. Frankl believes that true love values not only who the person is in the moment but also who the person may become. Through love the unrealized potential becomes more and more actualized.

Samplings from Theological Perspectives

Theology attempts to interpret human experience in relationship to the spiritual dimension of experience. Theology assumes that the spiritual dimension is not only a reality, but has a profound effect on human understanding and life. In order to glimpse the theological approach to love within the spiritual experience, this study will briefly examine the theology of John Wesley on love and perfection, Bernard Meland on the state of appreciative consciousness, Jonathan Edwards on Christian love and Paul Tillich on the ontological meaning of love. In addition to the above, brief quotes on the meaning of love from several other theologians are offered. It is important to note that there are no feminine voices represented here because theology until recent times was not open to women. Out of fifty-seven

²⁷ Viktor Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959), 111.

entries on theology and love at the Stanford library, there are only three entries by women authors.

John Wesley

John Wesley (1703-1791), a leading theologian, evangelist, reformer and founder of the Wesleyan tradition, bases much of his teaching on the Scripture, "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." For Wesley, reaching the highest ideal of human perfection means reaching that state in which all thought, word and action are grounded in love. He believes love is the end of the commandments and the purpose of faith. In holding that faith is a means and not the end, he departs from other Reformers in emphasis.

For Wesley, to love God with all one's mind, heart and soul means, "to delight in him, to rejoice in his will, to desire continually to please him, to seek and find our happiness in him and to thirst day and night for a fuller enjoyment of him."²⁸ To grow in this kind of love for God is a gift of the Holy Spirit since there is no ability to love in the natural person. That love which is pure must come from God; "Love must be born of God's love."²⁹

Wesley describes this human love that is grounded in Divine Love as that love which is patient and kind, is not jealous, does not seek its own or take into account

²⁸ [Wesley] The Works of John Wesley, vols. 7-8, authorized ed. (1872; reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 7:495.

²⁹ [Wesley], 7:46-49.

a wrong suffered. (1 Cor. 13). A person grounded in Divine Love cannot lie or speak evil, "cannot utter an unkind word of anyone; for love keeps the door of his lips."³⁰ Such a person is conformed to the will of God, lives according to the method laid down by Jesus Christ and the commandments of God.

Wesley sees holy love as an inward quality, and flowing from a pure heart. No actions, regardless of how good, will be perfect if the heart is impure.

Love means a holy heart with holy intents and purposes, created so by the Spirit and this can be perfect while its expressions in life are imperfect. Christian perfection is not a perfect living of life, but a perfect fountain from which the life flows.³¹

The state of Christian perfection, which requires a pure heart, is not beyond ignorance, error, infirmities, involuntary transgressions which result from the human condition of being in the flesh. Wesley distinguishes between voluntary and involuntary sins, saying that mistakes and sins of judgment "are not sins if love is the principle of action."³²

Wesley believes that the process of sanctification (to make holy or sacred) is a process of growing in love. Because every person is an heir of Adam, born corrupted and depraved, only by God's free and pervenient grace (that grace which prompts a person to seek God and to repent) is one justified or made righteous. Wesley makes a distinction between justification, which is the restoration of a person

³⁰ [Wesley], 8:346.

³¹ Leo George Cox, John Wesley's Concept of Perfection (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1964), 144.

³² Albert C. Outler, ed. John Wesley. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 301.

to a salvable condition, and sanctification, which is the process of growing in holiness. Justification is the beginning of a new life through faith in Jesus Christ. It is a death of the old person and a rebirth that removes the sins of the past and restores that person to God's favor. According to Wesley, a person grows in holiness as he/she cooperates with Divine Grace.

Wesley uses the terms holiness, perfection and salvation interchangeably. He believes that, after the initial rebirth, one grows toward perfection through a gradual sanctification. He says, "There is a perfection that is initial, a perfection that is progressive and a perfection that is final."³³ One grows in perfection through faith, but faith is the means, perfection is the goal. For Wesley, love is superior to faith.

"Love existed from eternity in God, the great ocean of love."³⁴ According to Wesley, love filled the hearts of human persons before the Fall. After the Fall, God gave the gift of faith so that persons might be restored to a state of love. Faith

is the grand means of restoring that holy love wherein man was originally created. It follows, that although faith is of no value in itself, yet it leads to that end--the establishing anew the law of love in our hearts."³⁵

Wesley holds that Calvinists and Romanists set Christian perfection too high, reserving it only for a state of future glory. The perfection of Wesley's teaching is for this world, for the here and now. He says, "I am sure [that] to set perfection too high

³³ Samuel Chadwick, The Call to Christian Perfection (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1943), 28.

³⁴ Outler, 225.

³⁵ Outler, 229.

is to make nothing of it."³⁶ He believes that correct interpretation of the New Testament requires the gradual growth in the purity of love. This growth does not happen without human cooperation with Grace. In the process of rebirth, God gifts the person with a new heart, since only God can "bring a clean thing out of the unclean" (Job 14:4). The person has responsibility to seek righteousness, to do good works, to honestly apprise oneself of self-delusions and self-righteousness, to repent one's failures and sin and to walk humbly with God.

Wesley teaches that "love is the highest gift of God--humble, gentle, patient love."³⁷ From this Divine Love, which becomes established in the human heart, human beings can live in peace, joy and love. He says, "This love we believe to be the medicine of life, the never-failing remedy for all the evils of a disordered world, for all the miseries and vices of men."³⁸

Wesley teaches that there is room for growth in love throughout life, no matter what state is attained. The state of absolute perfection will be known when one has crossed into the glory of eternity. As one grows in sanctification or holiness, one is molded by the Holy Spirit and given the fruits of the Spirit such as "love, joy, peace" (Gal. 5:22), and "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16).

³⁶ Outler, 228.

³⁷ Outler, 284

³⁸ [Wesley], 8:474.

In the beginnings of sanctification, holiness is incomplete, or at least not fully matured. But as one progresses, sin can be cast out and is replaced by a growing love that is experienced in inward communion and outward service.

Bernard Meland

Bernard Meland is selected as a contributing theologian in this study because he develops a theology centering on a particular aspect of love that embraces the aesthetic side of life. Meland argues that Christianity, growing out of the moralistic Judaic culture, influenced by the Pauline rejection of Hellenistic aesthetic values, and the later Reformist revolt against beauty and aesthetics, became a stern moralistic religion. The Christian ideal does not include aesthetic emotion as felt in Shakespeare, Shelley, Wagner or Botticelli. Those individuals educated in the fine arts and stimulated by a passion for truth find little to identify with in the Christian Church. It is the appreciative consciousness for aesthetic emotion that often makes life worthwhile according to Meland.

Theologians today shrink from the thought of becoming emotional The whole liberal movement in theology is a counterpart of a neo-rationalism based on the historical sciences The result is that modern theologians have shown the same concern to subordinate emotion to reason that characterizes the scientific temper.³⁹

Meland insists on the integration of beauty and emotion into the grind and grit of everyday life. He discusses Carl Sandburg's definition of poetry as a synthesis of

³⁹ Bernard Eugene Meland, Modern Man's Worship (New York: Harper and Bros., 1934), 262.

biscuits and hyacinths. Biscuits are the everyday essentials of life, the grinding of wheat and the baking of bread, while the hyacinths are the loveliness of life. Hyacinths stir the ecstasies of a buoyant heart. They are the baby's smile, the quiet sunset, the lover's caress that create precious memories and enhance life with mystery, color and fragrance. Both biscuits and hyacinths are necessary to right fullness of life. Too often these two aspects, the utilitarian and aesthetic, are divided and a person becomes an impractical idealist or a practical realist. What is needed is a synthesis of the two, a cultivation of personal integrity, wholesome habits, reasonable training in one's work, while at the same time one is reaching for the aesthetic measure that gives intensity to life and opens one to the awe and appreciative consciousness of life.

Meland points out that historically there have been two distinct religious temperaments, one insisting that religion means to do the will of God, the other that religion means communing with God. The first urges, "Do something," the second urges, "Be still and know that I am God," (Ps. 46:10). It is a rare person who is able to integrate and synthesize mysticism and action. "Mysticism is simply an openness toward life, a sense of wonder that impels one toward inquiry, awe and profound reverence."⁴⁰ Meland believes that appreciative consciousness or aesthetic mysticism "ennoble man [human persons] with cosmic humility" and open him [her] to the rich fullness of life including the sufferings of those around them.

⁴⁰ Meland, 292.

Jonathan Edwards

Jonathan Edwards, the eighteenth century American theologian whose book Christian Love, was published in 1874, states that love distinguishes the Christian.⁴¹ All Christian love flows from the same source or spring and it is the Spirit of love which indwells the heart and soul. This love is the love which is of God, and the Holy Spirit of love renews the heart. Love is the total of all virtue, for love disposes one to kindness, charity, mercy, humility, justice. It seeks the good for all human persons. By love a person's nature is extended, enlarged, expanded. Divine Love is contrasted with the human love which is in the world. Divine Love that enters the human heart is of a different nature, exceedingly powerful and abiding. Divine knowledge and Divine Love go together. As one grows in the spiritual view, love is drawn forth. One who loves with the indwelling Spirit of love will love others, will love God and will find ways to express this love in deeds. Love is the fruit of the Spirit and the pathway of the Christian. Christians walk in love.

Paul Tillich

Paul Tillich, an existential theologian, writes about the ontological meaning of love. "Life is being in actuality and love is the moving power of life."⁴² Love is the driving force behind life. It is "the drive towards the unity of the separated,"⁴³ the

⁴¹ Jonathan Edwards, Christian Love (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1874).

⁴² Tillich, 25.

⁴³ Tillich, 25.

reunion of the estranged. But unlike Eastern understandings of the impersonal nature of love, Christianity sees the loving person-to-person relationship in which the individual is both the subject and object of love. Tillich understands this drive toward union as the libido of Freud's terminology but says Freud describes only the perverted self-estranged stage. The drive toward reunion of the separated is basically the drive of love which has many forms of expression: epithymia (desire), philia, eros, agape.

Epithymia is traditionally understood as the desire for sensual and vital self-fulfillment; it is the drive to unite with that which is pleasurable. Eros is the drive toward ultimate values such as truth, beauty, justice and God. Philia is the drive toward union with one's self, with others. Agape is that love which is of the Divine and which underlies all forms and expressions of love. In all forms of love there is a dynamic power toward communion with the created order, nature, oneself, others and God. Self-love or self-affirmation is necessary, for the one who cannot relate to the self as a Thou cannot relate to another as a Thou.

Tillich further describes the dynamic power of love as the urge of life to affirm itself and to grow, saying that in the process

life unites dynamics with form. Everything real has a form, be it an atom or a human mind. At the same time, everything real drives beyond itself. It is not satisfied with the form in which it finds itself. It urges towards a more embracing, ultimately to the all-embracing form.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Tillich, 54.

Francis Baur

Francis Baur, a contemporary Franciscan priest, has presented a new view of Christian life in his book, Life in Abundance, based on process theology. In this, God is not supremely independent and essentially isolated from God's creation, but is One who cares, and is passionately concerned about the quality of individual lives. This view of God, who exists in a relationship with human beings giving and receiving, suffers when we suffer. God as love is intimately related in a personal way, is affected by what happens; God's experience is enriched by the quality of human experience. The purpose of existence is to love. Love is its own reason for being. In our loving we are enlarged, strengthened, transformed. The love of God does not begin in the hereafter, but in the here and now, in the fullness of intense experience. The sinful and dull at heart are satisfied with a sterile life, restricted and constricted. "The spiritual person is the one who is animated by the giftedness of the universe,"⁴⁵ and who responds in thanksgiving and celebration.

God does not coerce or force us into relationships. God is not the all powerful who by brute force makes demands. Instead, God is the one who calls us, who offers God's self, who urges us to choose the fullness of life. We have the absolute freedom to choose. "We alone are responsible for the persons we become,"⁴⁶ and the very essence of love demands freedom. Unfortunately, "we with

⁴⁵ Francis Baur, Life in Abundance (New York: Paulist, 1983), 112.

⁴⁶ Baur, 164.

our cracked mirrors have little confidence in our own beauty,"⁴⁷ and too often look to violence for survival. But Christ came that we might have abundance of life (John 10:10), and as we trust that God is love, that God loves us, we will come into the fullness of passionate life.

Other Theological Views

In attempting to find an operational definition of love, many theologians are reviewed. Time and space do not permit a greater analysis here; however, the definitions of several twentieth century theologians are valuable to note, even if briefly.

Daniel Day Williams in The Spirit and The Forms of Love defines love as "that expression of spirit which has communion in freedom as its goal." Williams points out that love is informed by the spiritual dimension of life, that it is the Spirit that is the loving entity of the world. He says, "Spirit is the best word we have to indicate the concrete personal expression of living, creating, being." That love which is a gift of grace is a "new love which God puts into the world through his dealing with man's sins and unlove."⁴⁸ Human persons are also gifted with freedom and in this freedom can express love or the opposite of love. That holy love of God which informs the created order can be perverted by the human inability to love.

⁴⁷ Baur, 172.

⁴⁸ Daniel Day Williams, The Spirit and the Forms of Love (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981), 3.

David Hassel uses the term "other-centered love" in his discussion of love. Other-centered love is that love which transcends the self, and loves with "enduring fidelity, intelligence, expansiveness, liberation, wholesomeness and self-sacrifice."⁴⁹ The Unchosen Absolute or God is the source of all other-centered love, and other-centered love is "the central and everlasting value of humankind's world and universe."⁵⁰

Richard Niebuhr believes that love is a state of reverence in which the preciousness of the other's essential essence is recognized. This knowing of the other requires that the self transcend the self and move beyond the boundaries of self. In appreciating the other there is no desire to change the other. He said:

Love is reverence: it keeps its distance even as it draws near; it does not seek to absorb the other in the self or want to be absorbed by it; it rejoices in the otherness of the other; it desires the beloved to be what he is and does not seek to refashion him into a replica of the self or make him a means to the self's advancement In all such love there is an element of "holy fear" which is not a form of flight but rather deep respect for the otherness of the beloved and the profound unwillingness to violate his integrity.⁵¹

⁴⁹ David Hassel, Searching the Limits of Love (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985), 127.

⁵⁰ Hassel, Searching the Limits of Love, 243.

⁵¹ H. Richard Niebuhr, The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), 35.

An Operational Definition

Thousands of definitions exist for love. Many thoughtful and loving people believe that a human person cannot be loving apart from God. John Wesley believed that one could grow toward the fuller states of perfect loving only in communion with and by grace of the God of Love. Is love therefore a spiritual capacity? Is it possible to grow in fuller expressions of loving disconnected from the ultimate, divine, creative force of life? What can those individuals who are highly actualized in loving tell us about growing in love?

Recent discussions on love use the term altruism to signify love given voluntarily for the purpose of doing for another, with no expectation of personal gain. Altruistic love can result in self-sacrifice as in the case of giving one's life for a beloved, or in risking one's life to protect a stranger. Altruism is unselfish, always desiring the highest good of another. Altruistic love is the highest expression of human love, according to this definition.

The terms agape and altruistic love need to be differentiated. Agape is that love of the New Testament exemplified by Jesus Christ in His self-giving that is not based on the apparent value of the other or on expectation of equal return. Agape is described by Paul (1 Cor. 13) as patient, kind, not puffed up, not seeking its own; agape thinks no evil, rejoices in truth, never fails; agape is greater than faith and hope. John finalizes the understanding of agape, saying, "God is love" (1 John 4:8). That love which is God is the complete and perfect expression of love.

Contemporary psychology in its study of love has attempted to remove the religious connotation by referring to the agape love of the New Testament as altruism. Leeds, in his study, gives three criteria for defining altruism: (1) the act is an end in itself, not done for self-gain; (2) the act is done voluntarily; and (3) the act produces some good.⁵² The Being-love that Maslow describes⁵³ is basically the same as altruistic love in that Being-love spontaneously wants to give to the other, and cares for the well-being of the other.

Throughout this study a differentiation will be made between immature human love, mature human love and Divine Love. Immature human love is that human love which is egocentric and basically self-serving. It is exemplified in the parent who uses the child to aggrandize him/herself, or who demands a return for love given. Immature human love would be that love which Maslow describes as deficiency love, with characteristics of dependency, need, low self-esteem, manipulation and control. Mature love or Being-love as described by Maslow is non-possessive, creative, trustworthy, seeing the value of the other.⁵⁴

The operational definition of love for this study uses a concept of mature love. This definition evolves from the literary review. The operational definition of love based on the literary review is: Mature love, or love in the upper reaches of human

⁵² R. Leeds, "Altruism and the Norm of Giving," Merrill Palmer Quarterly 9 (1963):229-40.

⁵³ Maslow, The Farther Reaches of Human Nature, 140-41.

⁵⁴ Abraham Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, 2nd ed. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1968), 42-43.

possibility, is that love in which reverence is inspired by a deep sense of appreciation for the unique, inherent, beautiful essence of each person and each created thing. This love requires eyes to see beyond the egocentric boundaries of the self into the meaning and truth of another. It is expressed in sharing, in nurturing and affirming the other, in caring for the well-being of the other.

Divine Love is that perfect love which issues from a Transcendent Source, and encompasses all forms of love from narcissistic to agape and altruistic. Divine Love pushes the bud toward fullest bloom, the person toward wholeness. Divine Love impels one toward union with another, with beauty and truth, with God and gives unconditionally without concern for return. Divine Love values the sinner, the ugly, the undeserving, cares for and nurtures the earth and all its creatures, is warm, sensual, sexual. Divine Love is ultimate, perfect love which includes all the known human values such as beauty, truth, wisdom, justice, compassion and tenderness.

Many theologians hold that all human love reflects some Divine Love, but no human love reflects pure Divine Love. Just as a clouded mirror cannot reflect the purity of light, the human soul with impurities of judgment, pride and guilt cannot reflect the pure love that is Divine Love. Nonetheless, this work attempts to study that human love which is in the upper reaches of human possibility.

CHAPTER 2

Love and the Human Understandings of Existence

"Any theory of love must begin with a theory of man, of human existence."¹

In Chapter 1 the subject of love was discussed with its many dimensions; the subject has been addressed by different disciplines and influenced by changing historical and cultural concepts. Daniel Day Williams points out that love has a history.² Its meaning has evolved over the centuries. Each theory of love reflects a particular concept of reality and existence. Each generation develops its theories of love out of its world view and understanding of the life processes. Plato interprets love as relationship with the eternal Good, while Aristotle understands love as relationship with another person. St. Augustine teaches that love is from God, that human persons, due to inherent depravity, can receive God's love only through Grace.

In Chapter 2, the Newtonian mechanistic model of created order and newly emerging paradigms discussed. In addition, a few foundational ideas of human existence are related to concepts of love, such as (1) duality in existence; (2) reason

¹ Erik Fromm, The Art of Loving (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), 6.

² Williams, 5.

as the historically dominant human faculty; and (3) maturation and evolution as inherent human possibilities. Concepts such as (1) the human potential for growth, (2) the evolutionary thrust of creation toward greater complexity, expanded consciousness, and (3) rich experience and change as inherent to the created order are developed in order to build the case that love is not only fundamental to life, but that love is the goal of the evolutionary process.

It is important for the reader to note that the thoughts in Chapter 2 are the result of the writer's desire to trace the historical roots of present understandings of human existence and their influence on love. No claim is made that these are the only roots or that a tracing of historical roots might not be seen differently by others. Each person must ultimately validate truth in his/her own experiences. The following is therefore one individual effort to bring into some workable focus the many complex systems which influence human concepts of love.

The Separation of Science and Religion

Before love can reign supreme, much work needs to be done by the human family. Love is only a potentiality in the individual and in the community. There is never any surety that this potentiality will be realized. Humankind must learn how to develop this potentiality for human loving, how to nurture and expand its growth. This will require the finest minds that science, theology and philosophy can offer.

Following the scientific discoveries of Copernicus, Galileo and Newton in the seventeenth century, science and religion diverged into two separate pathways. Viewed historically, this separation of science and religion may prove to be one of the most momentous events in human history. According to Alfred Whitehead, "the way in which the persecution of Galileo has been remembered is a tribute to the quiet commencement of the most intimate change in outlook which the human race had yet encountered."³ Galileo's persecution signaled the break between science and religion. Empirical science began its search for answers in verifiable facts, and the realm of spiritual mystery was relegated to religion.

The birth of modern science and its separation from religion have had tremendous repercussions on the history of love. Science adopted the tools of observation and analysis in search of verifiable facts, and in so doing, the subject of love was left to religion because love is not reducible to observation or mathematical formulas. Until recently, therefore, love has not been considered a viable subject for science. Scientists, too often, have taken the view that love is a sentimentality that is best left to the churches for investigation. Only with the birth of modern psychology in the late nineteenth century has love emerged as a subject for scientific investigation.

Irving Singer suggests that some theories of love have grown out of the tradition of realism in which empirical information, sensory experience and scientific

³ Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World (New York: Free Press, 1925), 2.

exploration are foundational. Other theories of love have grown out of traditions of idealism, which are more open to religious experience and metaphysical mysteries.⁴

A. R. Peacocke points to a change taking place. He says that the 1979 Oxford International Symposia represents one of the first times distinguished scholars of theology and science have come together at an international level under academic auspices. Many Christians proclaim "that reality is to be experienced in human lives as biological organisms, so knowledge of nature and society can never be irrelevant to our experience of God."⁵ Peacocke suggests that many advances in the natural and human sciences are consonant with the perspectives of the Bible.⁶ T.F. Torrance in his article stresses the order of the natural world as divine in origin and contingent in character.⁷

The Doctrine of Duality and Dominance of Reason

In reviewing human history, one sees evidence of a separation between the physical and spiritual dimensions of reality. The physical reality is that material side of reality that has form and substance, while the spiritual reality refers to that

⁴ Irving Singer, The Nature of Love, vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 3-12.

⁵ A.R. Peacocke, The Sciences and Theology in the Twentieth Century (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), x.

⁶ Peacocke, The Sciences and Theology, xix.

⁷ Peacocke, The Sciences and Theology, 81-97.

dimension of reality which consists of incorporeal being and divine influence. From this separation of the material and spiritual dimensions, human ideas of duality emerged.

The doctrine of duality is first succinctly argued by Plato (b. 428 B.C.). Plato divides reality into two realms, the temporal phenomenal world of appearances and the eternal realm of ideal forms which underlie all appearances. The real and unchanging realm of perfect forms is the source of ideal values such as truth, beauty and goodness. The temporal world of appearances can be known by the senses; the eternal world of ideal forms can be known by reason. Love is the desire for the possession of these ideal forms of the Good.

St. Augustine (b. A.D. 405), a leading architect of Christian doctrine and Western thought, further develops the doctrine of dualism. He separates the spirit and the flesh, heaven and earth, good and evil, and teaches of the eternal battle between these opposites. This separation has led to a theology that God is the Good while the human person is depraved and sinful with a deep disorder in his/her roots.

Aristotle (b. 284 B.C.), developing Plato's ideas of reason, extols reason as the primary and superlative human faculty. He provides the foundation for empiricism, the belief that truth can be known through the experience of sensation, observation and experimentation in the area of objective reality. The course set by the compass of empiricism has led to the age of rationalism and science reflected in the work of Copernicus, Galileo and Sir Isaac Newton. René Descartes (b. 1596) more fully articulates the importance of reason and the scientific approach.

Two Scientific Paradigms of Human Existence

In 1962 Thomas Kuhn in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions⁸ introduced the word paradigm to denote a body of shared knowledge, accepted theories or basic patterns of perceiving reality. The twentieth century has witnessed a shifting of paradigms as physicists have presented new views of the physical world. The Newtonian paradigm that has dominated our world for the past three hundred years is giving way to new paradigms that might be called organic, creative or holographic. These changing paradigms influence understandings of human existence and concepts of love.

Newtonian Paradigm (1600-1900)

Isaac Newton's (b. 1642) theories have dominated Western thinking for three hundred years. The Newtonian paradigm is described here as a paradigm of separation because it identifies the atom as the fundamental entity of separate physical reality. These atoms exist as impenetrable, individualized entities, infinitesimal, indivisible, and in perpetual motion. Atoms have no interior, cannot be penetrated, and can only relate exteriorly. By making certain attachments and relating externally, these atoms form into unique entities called molecules. Newton's world view is characterized by mechanistic and deterministic laws of nature. The

⁸ Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1962; reprint, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

closed universe is seen as a vast machine, somewhat like an intricate watch. The laws of nature are unchanging and are established by the master watchmaker (God) in order to operate creation in a mechanical and orderly way. Once the laws of nature--such as laws of gravity and motion, time and space--are understood, then one can predict the causality. These ideas of duality, determinism, mechanism and isolation of atomic entities have supported theological concepts of a dualistic creation and of a remote, transcendent God.

Ideas of the separateness of individual atoms have supported cultural ideas of the separateness of individual persons and of a material reality unaffected by an interior reality. The emphasis on material reality has provided a framework for the development of materialism, individualism, competition and behavioristic psychologies which center on the effects of the environment on human action. Concepts of love have been influenced by these fundamental principles of separation and materialism. Individualism has evolved into a need to protect and care for one's own. Religions have separated into various camps. The prevailing ideas hold that an individual is separate like the atoms, operating within a vast natural field, limited by some predetermined design.

This basic paradigm of separateness and material emphasis began to be challenged early in the twentieth century with the new theories in physics, psychology and other disciplines. The new paradigm is referred to here as the paradigm of interconnectedness. The following discussion illustrates how the paradigm of interconnectedness influences our understanding of human existence and love.

The Paradigm of Interconnectedness

The paradigm of interconnectedness supports a cosmology which holds that the universe is one, within which all the parts are interconnected; nothing exists in isolation; each part influences the whole. The grounding for this paradigm is not an unchanging mass such as an atom, but instead waves of energy that are in continual movement and relate internally as well as externally. Reality has both an inner dimension and an outer dimension.

Teilhard said in 1955 that physics' latest advances clearly show that "there are 'spheres' or 'levels' of different kinds in the unity of nature."⁹ This means that matter is structured in increasingly refined levels from molecules to atoms to particles and so forth, and that external masses are composed of layers of internal processes. Teilhard states that matter has not only a "without" but also a "within," and the core of matter is not a solid mass such as an atom, but is an energy. He asserts that all matter is interconnected and relates internally as well as externally, saying, "The farther and more deeply we penetrate matter, by means of increasingly powerful methods, the more we are confounded by the interdependence of its parts."¹⁰ This view supports the new scientific paradigms that describe the interrelationship of the created order. This interconnectedness affirms a theology of love in which all persons regardless of color or circumstance are brothers and sisters in the same family.

⁹ Teilhard de Chardin, Phenomenon of Man, 54.

¹⁰ Teilhard de Chardin, Phenomenon of Man, 54.

Max Planck's Quantum of Action Theory (1900) and Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity (1905) initiated a revolutionary new understanding of physics and the underlying principles of time and the universe. At the core of Planck's world view is "his belief in the objective evidence of a rational, wholly harmonious cosmos in which everything was united through a single, ultimate law."¹¹ Einstein's scientific cosmology implies that the universe is the totality of all material entities in interaction with one another.¹²

Ken Wilbur suggests that the new paradigm will be a holographic paradigm. A hologram is a particular image on a photographic plate which when exposed to ordinary light looks like a jumble of patterns, but when exposed to laser light reveals an intricate three-dimensional world. In ordinary light the image is indistinguishable because at each point the image is literally spread over the entire plate. If one piece of the plate is removed and exposed to laser light, it will still reveal the complete image. What this suggests is that the whole of an entity is found complete in all the parts and there is no separation, whether it be a subatomic particle or a human person. This view has been postulated by David Bohm, a physicist at the University of London, and Carl Pribram, a neurosurgeon at Stanford University. The theories that they propose are:

Our brains mathematically construct concrete reality by interpreting frequencies from another dimension, a realm of meaningful patterns,

¹¹ Stanley Jaki, The Road of Science and the Ways to God (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 166.

¹² Jaki, 191.

primary reality that transcends time and space. The brain is a hologram, interpreting a holographic universe.¹³

With the growing realization that there is both an inner and outer dimension to reality, science is increasingly investigating human consciousness as a vital force in the creative process. Roger Sperry of Cal Tech, a Nobel laureate, writes in the 1981 Review of Neurological Science that science has had a blind spot in the area of human subjective experience, and that science is having to now recognize inner conscious awareness as a causal reality.

Science is opening its investigation into the area of human consciousness as an active influence in the outer dimension of reality. Further, in the present scientific paradigm shift, the hard sciences of empiricism and positivism have discovered, as a result in the new data from quantum physics and the relativity theory that

without the assumption of a transcendental, spaceless, and timeless ground, the data themselves . . . have no cogent explanation. This transcendental ground whose very existence seemed necessitated by experimental-scientific data seemed to be identical to the timeless and spaceless ground of being (or Godhead) so universally described by the world's great mystics and sages.¹⁴

What we see emerging is a new paradigm which includes: (1) human consciousness as an active force in the creative process; (2) the interrelationship of all aspects of creation; and (3) an underlying transcendental intelligence.

¹³ Ken Wilbur, ed., Holographic Paradigm and Other Paradoxes (Boston: Shambhala, 1982), 5.

¹⁴ Wilbur, 5.

Just as the new scientific consciousness opens the door to a re-examination of the place of a transcendent intelligence (God) in creation and to the place of human consciousness, so too will it be necessary for science to examine the place of love in the overall fabric of creation. As science postulates a universe characterized by perpetual change and interconnectedness, it might also postulate a new cosmology in which love is understood as an integral principle of creation and humankind is seen as one interconnected hologram.

The following section of this chapter will attempt to show the rationale for investigating love as a human developmental potentiality.

Evolution

Unfolding Potentiality

The argument presented here is that humankind cannot afford to accept through cynicism or disillusion that what is, is all that can be. The fact that our world demonstrates an incomplete and immature level of love should not invalidate the human potential for maturation into more loving states. The following discussion on growth and development is for the purpose of arguing that maturation into fuller states is the natural urge of creation and that the inhibition of this urge results in the hostile and destructive abnormalities we see in our daily world. The fact that we observe creature devouring creature in nature does not mean that devouring others is the only prerogative of rational intelligence and creative love.

Human Growth

The development of increasing complexity is the process by which life unfolds. The acorn grows into the oak tree, the child into the adult. Change and movement are the fundamental characteristics of creation. The natural tendency of life is toward expanded and fuller expression, and frustration of this natural growth process leads to stagnation and, in the case of human persons, unhappiness and suffering.

This section on human growth is included in this dissertation in order to argue the case that humankind has a potentiality to live in loving relationship despite its sad history. As one views the reality of the present world, the hope for a loving world would seem like idealistic fantasy. The realists argue that humankind is basically self-serving, primitive in development and ultimately unloving except in immediate relationships. The realists point to our world, threatened on every side by crime, war, starvation and drugs. Human greed, lust for power and selfishness seem to strangle all hope for a loving world. The realists demean idealism as an attempt to gloss over the painful questions.

Pitirim Sorokin and Robert Hansen give a stark description of the positions of realism and idealism in saying that the sensate social sciences with their concentration on the pathological have debunked values of everything divine, spiritual, supermaterialistic, and concentrated on perversion, insanity and pathology, reducing the human person to electron-protons, reflex mechanisms, the libido and so

on. Sorokin says that the criminal has been researched far more than the saints. Social science seems "to have enjoyed moving in the muck of social sewers."¹⁵

With Robert Hansen, Sorokin says that we tend to believe in the

power of the struggle for existence, selfish interests, egoistic competition, hate, fighting, instinct, sex drive, the instinct of death and destruction, all-powerful economic factors, the power of rude coercion and of other negativistic forces. Marxism and the 'economic interpretation of history'; Freudianism and its 'libidinal-destructive' explanation of human behavior; 'instinctivist,' 'behaviorist' and 'psychosomatic' theories of personality and culture; Darwinistic and biological theories of the struggle for existence as the main factor of biological, mental, and moral evolution . . . are theories that dominate contemporary sociology, economics psychology, psychiatry, biology, anthropology, philosophy, history, political science and other social and humanistic disciplines In contrast we emphatically disbelieve the power of love, sacrifice, friendship, cooperation, call of duty, unselfish search for truth, goodness and beauty. These appear to us as something epiphenomenal and illusory. We call them by the terms: 'rationalizations,' 'self-deceptions,' 'derivations,' 'beautifying ideologies,' 'opiate of the people's mind,' 'smoke-screens,' 'idealistic bosh,' 'unscientific delusions,' etc. We are biased against all theories that try to prove the power of love and other positive forces in determining human behavior and personality.¹⁶

What then are the human possibilities for loving? Are disillusion and disbelief in love as a fundamental principle, grounded in truth or in ignorance? Teilhard holds that "between these two alternatives of absolute optimism or absolute pessimism, there is no middle way because by its very nature progress is all or nothing. We are

¹⁵ Pitirim A. Sorokin, Altruistic Love (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950), 3.

¹⁶ Pitirim Sorokin and Robert Hanson, "The Power of Creative Love," Meaning of Love, ed. Ashley Montagu (New York: Julian Press, 1953), 97-98.

confronted accordingly with two directions: one upwards and the other downwards, and there is no possibility of finding a half-way house."¹⁷

The next section is an attempt to: (1) argue idealism (the tendency to represent things in an ideal form or as they might be rather than as they are)¹⁸ as a necessary, integral balance to realism (the tendency to represent things as they are)¹⁹ in the pursuit of truth; (2) to demonstrate the human potentiality for growth; and (3) to build the case that the maturation of love in the individual and in the world is a human possibility. Because the particular focus of this study is the development of loving behavior in human persons, this study will examine theories and arguments that support the possibilities for growth in human persons. First, some of those principles which seem inherent to the life processes will be examined.

Change is a creative life principle. Nothing in either the inorganic or the organic world is permanently stable. Mountains and deserts are subject to change as the elements of wind and sun and rain accomplish their purpose. All living creatures are subject to the cycles of birth and death and the ever changing patterns of daily life. Like the changing patterns of a kaleidoscope, creation is continually rearranging its presentation. This perpetual change offers fresh possibilities with every moment and is the creative principle that protects against hardness and rigidity; in humans, change also protects against self-satisfaction and boredom. Each person is a

¹⁷ Teilhard de Chardin, Phenomenon, 233.

¹⁸ "Idealism," The Webster Reference Dictionary of the English Language (United States: United Guild Publishers, 1983).

¹⁹ "Realism," The Webster Reference Dictionary of the English Language.

configuration of many systems in continual flux. No person is the same person from one moment to the next. No person breathes the same air from one moment to another moment. No person can cross the same river twice, for the water flowing is always new.

Perpetual change does not, however, mean growth. Change can be either in the direction of activity or rest, expansion or contraction, health or dysfunction. Growth, on the other hand, implies expansion of boundaries, integration of old and new experiences, increase in capacity and complexity, development toward full maturity, actualization of richer potentiality. Growth suggests the possibility of fuller expression of life as when the bud grows into full bloom. Growth also suggests orderly development such as the oak tree, which begins as an acorn and gradually becomes a great tree. Growth indicates transformation as the elements of one stage are changed into a new synthesis, as the rose bud is a new synthesis of leaves and stems and roots. Growth indicates maturation, as the peach becomes increasingly sweet. Abraham Maslow defines growth as "the various processes which bring the person toward ultimate self-actualization."²⁰

Not all growth, however, is toward enhanced states of experience. Medicine recognizes the rampant growth of deadly malignancies. Societies are constantly threatened by the growth of violence, drugs and crime. Life-diminishing forces continually challenge life-affirming forces. The eternal struggle between life and death is witnessed every day. Freud was aware that physical dying begins at birth,

²⁰ Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, 26.

that the processes of metabolism and catabolism are in tension throughout life. Malefic or injurious growth, whether it be in the human body or the society, is the source of deep pain, suffering and death.

Healthy maturation is never guaranteed, for certain events, persons and circumstances can frustrate new growth. Despite the difficulties, an inherent impulse exists within life to express itself in ever fuller dimensions. The rose bud, unless inhibited, will unfold into the full blooming of maturity. This is the nature of life, whether it be the fruit, the flower or the person. The natural process of life is toward the ripening of the fruit before it falls off the tree and dies. When the natural maturation process is inhibited, stagnation begins. If this process of stagnation is not reversed, untimely death begins. But maturation implies favorable circumstances. In a favorable supportive environment, growth toward increasingly rich experience, complexity and consciousness seems a natural tendency of the life force. The life force pushes toward the full expression of life in each stage. A baby, if nurtured and protected, grows naturally into a child, the seedling into a tree.

The developmental model of human behavior assumes a process of growth from one state toward a fuller state. Dictionaries define development as a process of unfolding through evolution, of growing through progressive changes, of becoming increasingly manifest and mature. To develop requires a goal, a teleological purpose toward which the development moves. Development implies evolution, or the integration of past abilities into new abilities. Toyohiko Kagawa says, "the Cosmos

is love in the bud--one vast bud The message of evolution, that the world is still in bud." ²¹

Two concepts are fundamental to development as used in this study; potentiality and actualization of potentiality. This position is based on the belief that each stage of life has possibilities for maturity. Maturity is the result of living the fullest possibilities for a given stage. The seedling is as capable of expressing life for its stage as the mighty oak is for expressing life at its stage. The more whole and fully developed each stage, the greater are the possibilities for the following stages. The more sturdy and deeply rooted the seedling, the greater the possibilities for health in the succeeding stages of the oak tree. Growth builds upon the foundation of the previous stages.

Development, as used here, does not assign a higher value to the later stages of development. The child is just as valuable as the wise old man. Developmental inquiry seeks to determine the challenges and possibilities for each stage, and then to evaluate the actualization of these potentialities. Identifying common human developmental stages and tasks can lead to greater appreciation for and understanding of the ways in which human growth takes place.

²¹ Toyohiko Kagawa, Love: The Law of Life (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1929), 298.

Love as a Goal of Evolution

Human evolution, as defined in this study, is the movement of the changing patterns of life toward goals of greater complexity, richness of experience and expanded conscious awareness. In addition to these goals, the investigation suggests that the evolutionary urge is toward full development of the ability to love. However, not all growth is life-enhancing, leading to evolution. For instance, the growth of a person into greater obesity could actually weaken the whole organism and lead to early death. That growth which is toward stronger, healthier, richer experience can lead to the synthesis of these traits into a stronger entity. Webster describes evolution as the process of progress from unorganized simplicity to organized complexity.

The argument here is that the present state of humankind is not the evolved potential state. There is still great distance between what is and what might be. Alasdair MacIntyre, a contemporary philosopher, writing in After Virtue, discusses the teleological scheme of Aristotle (from Nichomachean Ethics) in which Aristotle makes "the fundamental contrast between man-as-he-happens-to-be and man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature."²² Aristotle holds that the science of ethics seeks to guide persons from the former to the latter state, from potentiality to action--to instruct persons in the prohibition of vices that inhibit the realization of one's true nature and one's true end. The untutored states are discrepant and

²² Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 50.

discordant and through education the desires and emotions are put in order, so that one's essential nature is realized. This view of ethics presupposes potentiality, rationality, and human teleos. According to MacIntyre, Aristotle gives to this ultimate state of wholeness the name of eudaemonia or that state which might be translated blessedness. Blessedness is the state of well-being, of being in harmony with oneself, with the Divine. It implies joy, prosperity, happiness. MacIntyre says that Aristotle's is a teleological philosophy. Aristotle holds that human beings have a specific nature in which they have goals and are moved by nature toward them.²³

Carl Jung, an analytic psychologist, also holds a teleological view of human life.²⁴ He theorizes that human growth is a process of individuation. By individuation he means the unfolding of an original undifferentiated wholeness into the fullest degree of differentiation, development and expression.²⁵ He believes that in adult mid-life a radical transformation takes place in which the person becomes more introverted and spiritual. The ultimate goal is the self-realization or "the fullest most complete differentiation and harmonious blending of all aspects of a human's total personality."²⁶ Jung views human development as an evolutionary process that begins with primitive organisms and gradually evolves into civilized human beings.

²³ MacIntyre, 139.

²⁴ Carl G. Jung, The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche, trans. R.F.C. Hull. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960), 405-6.

²⁵ Jung, The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche, 226.

²⁶ Calvin Hall and Gardner Lindsey, Theories of Personality (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1978), 134.

He believes that this process of evolution will take human beings to new dimensions in the future.

Kurt Goldstein, a psychiatrist who studied brain-injured soldiers during World War I, developed the Organismic Theory of Human Beingness. This is also a teleological theory. This theory emphasizes the unity, integration, consistency and coherence of the state of wholeness. It assumes "that the individual is motivated by one sovereign drive rather than by a plurality of drives." This basic drive is toward full actualization or realization. What appear as different drives, such as hunger, sex, power and achievement, are simply various expressions of the organism seeking to actualize itself. Goldstein explains that a healthy organism is one "in which the tendency toward self-actualization is acting from within and overcomes disturbances arising from the clash with the world, not out of anxiety but out of the joy of conquest."²⁷

According to Pierre Teilhard, human evolution implies the expansion of consciousness. As a person grows in the ability to perceive more deeply, "to see reality more clearly, to have ever more perfect eyes,"²⁸ his or her consciousness is expanded. This greater expanded awareness leads to full life and enables the human person to begin to see the broader and deeper dimensions of reality. Teilhard marks the expansion of consciousness as the guiding thread throughout evolutionary history; as humankind progresses, it becomes more conscious. Teilhard says, "Evolution is an

²⁷ Kurt Goldstein, The Organism (New York: American Book Co., 1939), 305.

²⁸ Teilhard de Chardin, Phenomenon of Man, 31.

ascent toward consciousness."²⁹ He speculates that as personal consciousness grows, the movement is away from separation and individualism toward a harmonized collectivity of consciousness. The first phase of evolution is a centrifugal movement toward individuality and personal freedom. During the second phase of evolution, there is a centripetal movement toward greater inter-communion and socialization on a planetary scale.

The direction of evolution is toward a universal convergence at the apex of evolution that Teilhard calls the Omega.³⁰ This Omega is one vast consciousness made up of all the human beings that are conscious within it. Teilhard explains that the Omega is somewhat like our brain, in which consciousness is the result of millions of cells working together; only in the case of the Omega, it is the consciousness of millions of human beings. The ultimate purpose for the evolution and expansion of individual consciousness and the convergence of all individual consciousness into the Omega is for the expression of a full state of love.

Teilhard identifies the final stage of evolution as a convergence into love. The Omega is that perfect unity point where all the centers of human consciousness merge into a harmonic expression of love. He sees the power of love developing until it embraces the total of humanity and the earth. As love develops into its highest potentiality, it becomes more inclusive, more universal, yet this universal state of love does not also mean depersonalization. As love develops, a person becomes

²⁹ Teilhard de Chardin, Phenomenon of Man, 258.

³⁰ Teilhard de Chardin, Phenomenon of Man, 257-64.

more differentiated, complete, whole. The individual wholeness contributes to the greater whole without losing its individuality. Teilhard points out that wherever in nature there is union, as in the cells of a body, there is differentiation. Individuals coming together do not become merged like drops of water in an ocean, but tend instead, to become more differentiated and more completely themselves.³¹ "The more they [these individuals] become in conjunction, the more they find themselves as 'self'."³² In other words, as we give ourselves away, we find ourselves. "Love alone is capable of uniting living beings in such a way as to complete and fulfill them, for it alone takes them and joins them by what is deepest in themselves."³³

Teilhard believes that love dies in contact with the impersonal, that love can live only in relationships. Teilhard describes love as "the primal and universal psychic energy"³⁴ that calls us to union. As love evolves from its most primitive forms at the molecular level in which the goal is simple reproduction, it moves toward harmonized love, which is increasingly conscious, personal and universal.

This brief review of the human understanding of existence suggests that the paradigm based on a fixed material universe operating by unchanging natural laws is being challenged by a paradigm of an organic spiritual universe operating by creative and dynamic improvisation. The old scientific views of strict empiricism,

³¹ Teilhard de Chardin, Phenomenon of Man, 269-70.

³² Teilhard de Chardin, Phenomenon of Man, 262.

³³ Teilhard de Chardin, Phenomenon of Man, 265.

³⁴ Teilhard de Chardin, Phenomenon of Man, 298.

positivism, determinism are challenged by the possibilities of mystery, creative intelligence, freedom and consciousness. There is an indication that new understandings of human wholeness are emerging in which spiritual aesthetic and emotional dimensions of human possibility are valued as deeply as rational dimensions. Idealism is finding a voice to balance the one-sided truth of realism, to balance what is with what can be. The values of the material age are increasingly challenged in the search for deeper values as guides to human life. As the world enters a new age of consciousness and possibilities, the search for the meaning and possibilities of human love will continue.

In Chapter 3, love is examined from some psychological and theological perspectives in order to explore the subjective side of love. The focus of Chapter 2 is the breadth of love through some of the basic paradigms of human existence. The focus of Chapter 3 is the depth of love in the inner psychological dimensions and the range of love from very immature narcissistic love to more fully mature love. Assuming that not all love is of the same quality, the investigation in Chapter 3 searches for the psychological dynamics that either inhibit or nourish the maturation of love. Psychology is explored because psychology is particularly concerned with inner states of human experience. The underlying question is what are the possibilities for the maturation of human love?

CHAPTER 3

Inquiry into the Psychological and Subjective Nature of Love

The twentieth century has witnessed a great search into the psychological nature of the human person. Human behavior in daily life has increasingly been understood as the outer expression of complex systems within the human psyche, which is composed of intellectual, emotional, physical, historical, cultural and spiritual dimensions. What has been learned has permanently changed how human nature is viewed, for the roots of outer behavior most often lie deep within the inner psyche. No human person is uncomplicated and without hidden motives. An adult ability to love is influenced by the love that the adult received as a child and by all of the complexity of life experience.

The goal of this chapter is to explore the dimension of love within the human psyche in order to understand better some of the factors that influence the growth of love. Because the research interviews are directed to the inner subjective experience of the interviewees, a brief look at the subjective side of human experience will be helpful.

In this chapter the possibilities and range of love from less developed states or unhealthy expressions to highly developed and healthy states is explored and the theories of Maslow, Fromm and others are examined. This study is an attempt to

build on the pioneering work of researchers who have focused on the possibilities for growth in human persons. In Chapter 2, the theory is argued that growth is a natural process, and unless inhibited, will unfold into new and richer human experience. Chapter 3 examines both inhibited and undeveloped love, and love in higher reaches of human possibility, in order to understand the dynamics and complexities of love in human persons.

Sigmund Freud is chosen for study in Chapter 3 because of his substantive contribution in the area of unconscious motivations that underlie and influence the expressions of love, and also for his work in developmental theory. Freud discovered that what is often called love is a mask for other psychological motivations such as the need for self-aggrandizement (narcissism), or unresolved conflicts such as mother fixation (oedipus complex). Freud succeeds in showing the dark side of human behavior, the influence of pathology, and the hidden inhibitors of love. Other theorists are cited who have contributed to an understanding of the inhibiting factors in human love. Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers contribute to knowledge of the possibilities for human love in its more healthy states of development. In contrast to work in individual psychology, Eric Fromm's study of love centers around individuals in relationship to the world and other persons. These theories are examined in order to understand better the complexities of growing in human love and to gain insight into the range of human possibilities for loving.

Love and the Unconscious

Sigmund Freud studied the inhibitors of human love with his in-depth probing of the desires, impulses and needs hidden within the unconscious. His insights demonstrate that love is not always what it seems to be, that love is often rooted in unwholesome need. Underlying all love, both mature and immature, is the realm of the unconscious that Freud brings to human awareness. Love cannot be adequately understood without understanding the complexities that arise from the influence of the unconscious.

With his investigation of the realm of the unconscious, Freud attempts to prove that many human thoughts and emotions emerge from a dark and hidden reservoir deep within the human psyche. The unconscious is a smoldering cauldron of animalistic passions and instincts, of repressed thoughts and memories. Freud's work suggests that the mind is like an iceberg with only the tip of the iceberg being the conscious mind. This hidden and unknown underworld is the source of much human behavior that controls conscious thoughts and deeds. As a result of Freud's work, people can no longer take human activities at face value, for behind the obvious are the unconscious motives of human behavior.

The psychological understanding of love has become exceedingly complex as a result of these discoveries. What has been demonstrated is that many expressions of what appears to be love are actually manipulations aimed to control others. For instance, a mother who makes her children dependent by over-solicitous mothering

may be motivated by unconscious fears of abandonment, or a need to be important. The surface expressions of love can be rooted in unconscious fear, self-centeredness, aggressiveness, anger and so forth.

Another example of behavior driven by unconscious motivation is the male child's affection for the mother. Freud develops a theory that the son has desire to possess the mother sexually and to displace the father (the oedipus complex). The strong ambivalent feelings of desire for the mother and fear of the father lead the son to feelings of both power and weakness. Freud believes that although this is the child's early experience of a type of love, the attitudes that the child adopts as a result of this deep desire will affect him throughout life.

Freud does not accept the evolution of love into more perfect expressions. Unlike Plato, he denies that the cosmic force which binds all living substance is oriented toward perfection. The universal love that Freud calls eros "does not progress toward stages of greater spirituality."¹ Freud says that "the nucleus of all love is sexual love with sexual union as its aim."² His theory of psycho-sexual development culminates with the genital stage of sexual love.

Freud recognizes and points to a basic aggressiveness in human nature. He says, "I adopt the standpoint, therefore, that the inclination to aggression is an

¹ Irving Singer, The Nature of Love: The Modern World, vol. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 112.

² Sigmund Freud, "The Libido Theory," Collected Papers, ed. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 1959), 5:131.

original, self-subsisting instinctual disposition in man."³ Aggression is intensified by sexual inhibition. Due to this belief in an innate human aggressiveness, Freud holds a pessimistic view of human evolution and the human ability to grow more loving.⁴ He argues that the Judeo-Christian command to love one's neighbors as oneself is unrealistic and naive. Because Freud subscribes to an economic idea in which libido or sexual love is limited in quantity, he does not believe in giving it away thoughtlessly to undeserving individuals. The Christian admonition to love your enemies seems to him equally irrational.⁵

The Maturation of Love

Human understanding of love is further influenced by Freud's developmental theories. His first theories on love, developed in his Three Essays on Sexuality, written between 1905 and 1910, radically changed popular concepts of the infantile origins of love.⁶ He argues that the infant has primitive feelings of sexuality that are first experienced around the sensual zones of the mouth, anus and genitals. This infantile state is characterized by narcissism, in which the infant is the center of the world, absorbed in the self as the primary love object. The infant experiences erotic

³ Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1961), 69.

⁴ Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, 59.

⁵ Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, 57.

⁶ Sigmund Freud, Three Essays on Sexuality (New York: Avon, 1962).

pleasure from satisfaction at the mother's breast, thus developing a sexual attachment to the mother. The conflict begins between narcissistic love and incestuous love. This sexual attachment for the mother reaches its culmination in the oedipus complex, in which the child wishes to possess the parent of the opposite sex and to murder the parent of the same sex. Either extended narcissistic love or incestuous fixation can result in an abnormal ability to love. A latency period follows from about age five to adolescence in which the child is not primarily motivated by sexuality. During latency the sexual current and the conscious affection for the love object are split, with the sexual current becoming repressed. The second stage of sexual and love development occurs during adolescence, at which time a substitute for the loved parent is sought. In this stage the developmental task is to integrate the previous stages.

Freud theorizes that throughout life all love will be influenced by this first love of a parent, but the child has to make a successful transition in finding a non-incestuous love in order to experience normal love. If development is fixated at any stage, normal development will not be possible and neurosis and perversion will result.

Freud began his work in hopes of discovering more about love. What he did learn is that many factors inhibit the human ability to love and that maturation requires successful integration and synthesis at each state of the developmental process. Repression of natural feelings and instincts, aggressive tendencies, socio-cultural limitations, fixations at early stages, complicate, inhibit and stunt the normal

maturation of love. Freud contributes to human understanding in demonstrating psychological factors that can limit the ability to love. Other researchers have found similar results and have discovered the profound degree to which human health is dependent upon love.

Love Impairments

Scott Peck, a psychiatrist, in his book, People of the Lie, presents case studies in which persons denied love in the infantile stages of life become instruments of demonic hatred in later stages.⁷ That love begets love and hate begets hate is validated in a study by P.A. Sorokin in which he finds that between sixty-five and eighty percent of friendly or hostile approaches made by persons to others draws a similar response.⁸ Bowlby and Levy confirm in their studies that severe pathologies develop from the lack of love.⁹

John Bowlby, in a research study of persons incapable of love, finds that in cases where children have been denied mother love in infancy, the infants either have died or have grown into persons incapable of loving others. As children they exhibited a selfish lack of caring for others, and as adults, are incapable of getting along with others. Such persons are cold in their behavior toward others and remain

⁷ M. Scott Peck, People of the Lie (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983).

⁸ Pitirim A. Sorokin, "The Powers of Unselfish Love," New Knowledge in Human Values, ed. A. H. Maslow (Chicago: Regnery, 1971), 3-12.

⁹ John Bowlby, Maternal Care and Mental Health (Geneva: World Health Organization, 1952); and D.M. Levy, Maternal Overprotection (Columbia University Press, 1943).

aloof. Although they desire love, they have inadequate social and relational skills for acquiring love as adults. These people form superficial relationships if they have relationships at all. They are incapable of deep feelings toward others, and often attempt to substitute power and wealth for love. They also may use coercion or insincere declarations of love as a means of acquiring love. Hate, then, can be understood as developing out of the frustration of the human need for love.¹⁰

Ashley Montagu describes hate as a form of love turned in on itself. The infant is not born hateful, but as the child's reaching for love is continually rebuffed or frustrated, the emotion turns into hate. This hate is often expressed in aggressive behavior that seeks to compel love. When both the physical and emotional needs of the child are unmet, the child will often develop negative behaviors in order to elicit attention. Montagu asserts the probability that "wherever aggressiveness appears . . . it is the indirect expression of the desire to love and be loved."¹¹

For Montagu, the need to be loved, to be valued, to be appreciated, to be in meaningful relationship with others is a primary and fundamental human need. He also believes that as basic as the need to be loved is, the need to love is just as basic. Nothing is more painful than to be ostracized, or left alone. Love is the act of relating to others, of being a part of a group. This need for cooperative relationship or interdependence is, according to Montagu, a fundamental principle in all created matter. Even the particles within the nucleus of an atom exhibit a basic cooperation

¹⁰ Bowlby, Maternal Care and Mental Health.

¹¹ Montagu, The Meaning of Love, 9.

and interdependence. To the extent that a system departs from these two aspects, the system becomes malfunctioning and disoperative. Science has found that the structure of inorganic matter is built on the cooperative relations of the particles within the atoms.

Children who do not receive affirming love and adequate validation of their human value can suffer life-long impairment of their ability to love. Scott Peck says:

Treated badly by its parents, a child will usually assume that it is bad. If treated as an ugly, stupid, second-class citizen, it will grow up with an image of itself as ugly, stupid and second-class. We may express this as a general law of child development. *Whenever there is a major deficit in parental love, the child will, in all likelihood, respond to that deficit by assuming itself to be the cause of the deficit, thereby developing an unrealistically negative self-image.*¹²

Love Possibilities

Abraham Maslow (1908-1970), a pioneer in the study of human potentiality and optimal human health, feels that psychology has concentrated too much on human misery and conflict, and needs to study other aspects of human experience: the side of gaiety, exuberance, love, happiness. Maslow presents research evidence showing that in almost every newborn "there is an active will toward health, an impulse towards growth or towards the actualization of human potentialities."¹³ Neurosis is the result of inhibition of growth, according to Maslow.

¹² Peck, People of the Lie, 60.

¹³ Abraham Maslow, "Neurosis as a Failure of Personal Growth," Humanitas 2 (1967b): 153-70.

Maslow assumes that the innate essential nature of a human being is good, not inherently evil, destructive or violent. However, a benign environment is required for the maturation of creative potential; ignorance, social pathology and distorted thinking twist the inner nature of human beings, and this leads to destructiveness. He distinguishes between the basic needs of hunger, affection, security, self-esteem and the meta-needs of justice, goodness, beauty, unity, and so on.¹⁴ The basic needs are prepotent to the meta-needs, but both are instinctive and inherent.

Healthy people who have actualized a high potentiality are characterized as being realistic, natural, spontaneous, appreciative, creative, loving. They identify with humankind and they form intimate relationships. In loving, the highly actualized person appreciates the loved one, desires only his/her good, views the loved one with fascinated attention, finding the imperfections as endearing.¹⁵ The ability to love is an important aspect of the self-actualized person. (Self-actualization can now be tested. The Shostrom Person Orientation Inventory provides a good indication of the degree of actualization of an individual.¹⁶

In addition to these forms of love, Maslow differentiates between "deficiency-love," in which the love needs have never been sufficiently gratified, and "being-love." In deficiency-love, the individual operates from excessively deprived need and dependency and feels impelled to manipulate and control the lover in order to

¹⁴ Maslow, The Farther Reaches of Human Nature, 295-335.

¹⁵ Maslow, The Farther Reaches of Human Nature, 140-41.

¹⁶ E. Shostrom, Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) : A Test of Self-Actualization (San Diego: Educational and Industrial Testing Service, 1963).

protect against loss of love. People who are deprived suffer from low self-esteem, vulnerability and unworthiness. Such persons, suffering from love deprivation, feel a "love hunger," and may be described as ego-centered, selfish or overly concerned with getting love. Until the love needs are adequately satisfied, these persons will continue to be obsessed by the drive for love.

In being-love, love is so great and pure for "the object itself that its good is what we want, not what it can do for us, i.e., when it passes beyond being means and becomes an end. As with an apple tree we can love it so much that we do not want it to be anything else: we are happy with it as is."¹⁷ Being love then "is [sometimes at least] non-interfering and can delight in the thing itself: therefore, it can gaze at the object without guile, design or calculation of any selfish kind."¹⁸ Maslow theorizes that given a benign and nurturing environment, the natural impulse of life is toward maturation. The next section will examine some constituents of a favorable environment.

Favorable Environment for Maturing in Love

Carl Rogers offers insight into a favorable environment and studies the behavioral changes that take place within an individual who experiences unconditional positive regard or a positive affective attitude from others. The laboratory for Rogers' research was his therapeutic relationships in which he learned that an

¹⁷ Maslow, The Farther Reaches of Human Nature, 140.

¹⁸ Maslow, The Farther Reaches of Human Nature, 140.

attitude of unconditional positive regard from the therapist provides the optimal environment for growth in the client. Although he does not use the term love for this attitude of the therapist, he does explain what he means. Unconditional positive regard requires that the therapist have a considerable degree of congruence. This means that he/she is free to experience deep feelings and to express these feelings in an honest, clear manner when appropriate. A transparency exists that is the opposite of a facade or front. The therapist exhibits caring through empathetic understanding and listening and communicating acceptance. Rogers believes that to love another is to be fully present with that person, and to experience that person as a person of value, to see in him/her potentiality, and "to confirm him/her as a living person capable of creative inner development."¹⁹ Unconditional positive regard means for Rogers an acceptance of the other no matter what his/her feelings, behavior, conditions, or negative attitude. Giving the other person permission and freedom to be wholly who he/she is in the moment develops trust, and from this sense of trust, one learns to explore feelings, to drop facades and defenses, to become more autonomous and to grow toward being a more well-functioning person. Rogers' findings indicate that within a climate of unconditional positive regard, an individual moves toward self-acceptance, becomes more creative and cooperative, more integrated, self-confident, more like the person he/she wants to be.

The climate of love enhances growth toward human wholeness, a state of full functioning that leads to what Rogers describes as the good life. His characteristics

¹⁹ Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 56.

of wholeness include: (1) openness, and awareness of feelings; (2) ability to live fully in the moment; (3) trust in one's organismic reaction to stimuli or data; (4) ability to be one's self, and (5) an increasing richness, variety and range of experience, which results in life that is more meaningful, exciting, challenging, and creative.²⁰ Love, then, is the key that makes wholeness possible. The indications from Rogers' work are that the maturation of potentiality takes place within a relationship of caring, affirmation, congruency and realness.

Expressions of Love

Eric Fromm, like Maslow and Rogers, believes that love in the upper reaches is a human possibility, and he gives insight into how persons experience and express this love. He believes that "love is the only answer to the problems of human existence," that love that can overcome the loneliness of separateness, the deepest human need.²¹ Without union with another in a love that transcends separateness, one remains imprisoned. He says, "Man of all ages and cultures is confronted with the solution of one and the same question: the question of how to overcome separateness, how to achieve union, how to transcend one's own individual life and find at-onement."²² Through love one achieves union, but for Fromm it is essential

²⁰ Rogers, On Becoming a Person, 183.

²¹ Fromm, The Art of Loving, 6.

²² Fromm, The Art of Loving, 8.

in loving that one maintain one's integrity. Love not only overcomes separateness, it permits a person to become him/herself.

Love is defined by Fromm as "active concern for the life and growth of that which we love."²³ Fromm believes that a person's self must be as much an object of love as another person. "The affirmation of one's own life, happiness, growth and freedom is rooted in one's capacity to love, i.e., in care, respect, responsibility and knowledge."²⁴ In other words, the love of self and love for others are intricately connected.

To care for another means concern for the health and well-being of another, just as a mother loves her child and responds to that child's needs for food, warmth and love. At times this care requires personal sacrifice. Love implies responsibility, or the active response to the loved one's needs. Respect denotes the ability to see and value the person as he/she is, to be aware of his/her uniqueness and individuality, and to affirm the other's growth. Knowledge is a necessary ingredient in love because the more we truly know another, the more we understand the true personhood of the other.

Love for Fromm is an activity characterized by giving and not by receiving. That giving which is love brings to the giver a sense of aliveness, power, and vibrancy. In such love there is no sense of depletion. In contrast, people who are exploitive, who give only in order to receive or have a hoarding characteristic, feel impoverished

²³ Fromm, The Art of Loving, 22.

²⁴ Fromm, The Art of Loving, 50.

in giving. Only those persons who have matured beyond a narcissistic self-centeredness are able to give for the joy of giving.

Fromm further defines his theory of love as an "attitude or orientation of character which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole."²⁵ This attitude of love radiates out toward all people. If one's loving is exclusively directed only to a few persons, Fromm believes it is not love, but a type of neurosis or egotism, or aggrandizement of the self. For Fromm love is an activity of the soul and cannot be restricted to a few. Love does not depend on finding just the right person who is worthy to be loved. Brotherly love is the fundamental kind of mature love that sees all human persons as related, worthy of care and respect. It sees beyond the surface differences to the core of what is common to all persons. Fromm contrasts motherly love and love between equals, elevating motherly love to the highest form of love. Because the mother and child are not equal, the mother's love is more unselfish and altruistic. Fromm points out that most mothers love the small helpless infant, but the real task of motherly love comes when the child begins to separate from her. "The mother must not only tolerate, she must wish and support the child's separation."²⁶ Motherly love involves not only unconditional affirmation of the child's life, an orientation of care and respect for the integrity of the child, it imparts to the child a "love for living."²⁷ Fromm postulates that only the mother who

²⁵ Fromm, The Art of Loving, 38.

²⁶ Fromm, The Art of Loving, 43.

²⁷ Fromm, The Art of Loving, 41.

is loving and happy can give to the child a love of life. Because the mature mother does not come from an orientation of deprivation and need herself, she is able to assist the child to grow in independence, autonomy and separation.

Conclusion

The work of these researchers, Freud, Maslow, Rogers and Fromm, indicates that a broad range of love exists, including more immature, inhibited and neurotic love, as well as more mature and healthy love. Each stage of human development offers potentiality for the experience of either mature or immature love. The more healthy and developed love is at each stage, the more possibilities for healthy love at future stages. Freud opens human understanding to the developmental tasks for each stage of maturation and marks well the damaging effects of unsuccessful growth on the human ability to love. Maslow, Rogers and Fromm describe the possibilities of healthy love and some of the factors which enhance the maturation process.

This brief psychological inquiry indicates the complexity of the range of human love. The quality of an individual's love is influenced in infancy by the love received, and throughout life love will be influenced by deep and hidden psychological factors in the unconscious. The possibilities for human love extend from the most pathological and egocentric to the most altruistic and self-giving. Somewhere deep within the human psyche are the psychological and spiritual elements that determine and influence the quality of love.

This chapter ends the review of the literature on love and the examination of love from several perspectives. The intent has been to offer the reader some further insights into the breadth and depth of the subject of love, drawing from the spectrum of theorists who have given attention to the subject. The next section focuses on the empirical study of love through research interviews. Chapter 4 describes the method used for conducting the research, including the selection of the interviewees and the method of conducting and analyzing the interviews. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are reports on the interview data, presenting major themes in the self-reports of the interviewees as they share their views and experiences of human love.

Chapter 4

Method for Research

Classification of the Study

Chapter 4 is an explanation of the rationale and procedures used in developing this empirical study. This research is an exploratory study within the discipline of the psychology of religion. The method for analysis is based upon the Glaser and Strauss method of grounded theory.¹ An exploratory study is for a purpose of discovering new insights into the subject in order that a more definitive hypothesis can be formulated for further research. It is an appropriate approach according to Selltiz, et al.² when little is known about the subject. The exploratory study is an inductive method of research in which the researcher moves from observations of behavior to developing an hypothesis about this behavior. The major emphasis is on the discovery of new ideas and insights, not on proving a particular hypothesis.

Exploratory research study requires flexibility as new information emerges, in order to move beyond what initially is a vaguely defined problem. "Research means

¹ Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research (Chicago: Aldine, 1967).

² C. Selltiz, M. Jahoda, M. Deutsch and S. Cook, Research Methods in Social Relations (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959).

collecting, analyzing and interpreting information in an attempt to answer questions."³ According to Franklin Shontz, research includes the empirical component of observation, experimentation, and measurement, and also the theoretical or subjective component of reason, memory, and intuition.⁴ This particular study is directed toward the subjective side of human experience, and therefore is more influenced by qualitative research methods. Such idiographic investigation contrasts with the nomothetic approach that stresses reliable measures and objective methodologies. The term idiographic investigation is used to emphasize "the reflective, intuitive individuality"⁵ that is the focus of qualitative and descriptive research. Historically it has been associated with the phenomenological and psychoanalytic psychologies.

This research is focused on idiographic investigation because the phenomenological, subjective, descriptive components of research are being emphasized. The purpose is to study the relationship between human persons and their experience of human and Divine love. The method is to register qualitative data which, according to Shontz, provides information about forms and patterns, meanings and processes, instead of quantities or amounts. It describes what something is like, rather than how much of it exists. Qualitative research can give information about individual experience. It utilizes verbal description that at best is

³ Franklin Shontz, Fundamentals of Research in the Behavioral Sciences: Principals and Practice (Washington D.C.: American Psychiatric Press, 1986), 4.

⁴ Shontz, 4.

⁵ Spilka, Hood and Gorsuch, 322.

an inexact method, since everyone's experience of meaningful words such as loyalty, happiness, love will be different. For this reason, thoughtful care was given by the researcher to developing interview questions that could provide the best possible common understanding. From this approach to research, new insights may be gained to guide a more specific research design in which one aspect of the complicated system can be researched in a more quantitative manner using controlled experiments, questionnaires, and statistical analysis.

This research study is set within the discipline of the psychology of religion, which "uses psychological categories of thought and research methodologies for the purpose of increasing the understanding of those human beliefs, experiences and behaviors associated with the divine or with other systems of ultimate meaning in given cultures"⁶ Henry Wieman says that the psychology of religion is "a study of that kind of human behavior which attempts to connect human life with what is supremely worthwhile It is a study of human behavior in religious living."⁷ Psychology is itself the study of individual experience within its cultural context. "Formal research into the meaning of human life, as well as everyday self-understanding is the province of the modern European and American psychology."⁸

⁶ H. Clinebell, "Psychology of Religion," Harper's Encyclopedia of Religious Education, eds. Iris V. Cully and Kendig B. Cully, (New York: Harper and Row, 1990), 518.

⁷ Henry Wieman with Regina Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion (New York: Cromwell, 1935), 43.

⁸ Joseph Byrner, The Psychology of Religion (New York: Free Press, 1984), 1.

In order to understand human experience, it is critical to understand the religious belief systems and experiences which underlie human life.

To design a scientific method in order to explore human behavior and understanding is a challenge. It demands moving from the natural sciences into those human sciences which investigate the inward states of subjective experience. Any research which attempts to explore the subjective realm of a person's spiritual and psychological life is confronted with the difficult task of attempting to describe the indescribable, of trying to express abstract values in clear concrete language, and of giving a clear expression to that which has been experienced on the deepest levels of feeling and intuition. This is beyond objective, calculated experimentation and requires entering the subjective realm of human consciousness and experience. It requires a devotion to truth on the part of both investigator and subject and a sensitivity to any emerging data that challenges old paradigms and beliefs.

The ideal study would be an investigation that is unclouded by the assumptions of the investigator. In reality the investigator influences the procedure by the selection of the subject to be investigated, the method to be employed and the persons to be interviewed. Underlying these decisions are the basic beliefs of the investigator which give direction to the investigation. According to Holmes Rolston,

To be objective is not in most cases to be neutral or indifferent; nor does it prohibit the holding of previously gained, presently owned, presumed beliefs. Objectivity requires only that one be willing and

anxious to test convictions against experience and logic and to reform them accordingly."⁹

The best the investigator can do is to acknowledge honestly the conscious assumptions that underlie the study. In this investigation the researcher acknowledges the following assumptions:

1. That underlying the created order is a universal, divine, intelligent Principle that is both immanent in, and transcendent of, creation.

2. That within the human constellation is a divine spark that urges person toward love, unity, wholeness and fullness of life. As this internal spark is frustrated, the person suffers.

3. That life-affirming love is critical to the growth and preservation of human persons. This study grows out of the desire to learn more about what happens when the creative urge is not inhibited but expands into fuller expressions of love.

Data Collection--The Personal, In-Depth Interview

In investigating alternate methods of data collection, the in-depth personal interview was chosen for this study as the best procedure to follow. The in-depth interview seeks to probe deeper psychological levels of human experience, such as

⁹ Rolston Holmes, III, Science and Religion (New York: Random House, 1987), 22.

emotions, memories, beliefs, values and attitudes. As an interviewee reflects on his/her life, important events, patterns, experiences emerge.

The personal interview has important advantages over statistical surveys since the interviewer and interviewee can establish rapport which motivates the respondent to answer as fully as possible. It also gives the interviewer an opportunity to control the order of questioning, and to ask for clarification and elaboration on answers to questions. It allows flexibility so that the interviewer can probe deeply or explore unexpected emergent areas of interest. It is, however, costly and time consuming. Kidder and Judd recommend the personal interview for "maximal data quality"¹⁰ whenever it is possible. According to Selltiz, Jahoda et al., scientists working in uncharted waters have found that intensive in-depth interviews can be particularly valuable. Some of Freud's most important insights come from the intensive study of his patients.

The in-depth interview focuses on the experience of the interviewee in the area to be researched. Subjects are chosen, not randomly but carefully, for their experience and expertise in a particular area. The interviewees in this study were told in the interview that they would have an opportunity to review any material attributed to them before publication. The interviewees were aware of the scope and purpose of the interview, which had been given in the letter of request. The interviews lasted between 2½ and 4 hours.

¹⁰ L. Kidder and Charles Judd, Research Methods in Social Relations (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978), 230.

Interviewees were given freedom to go beyond the questions and to select those experiences which seemed to be the most meaningful in their life journey, and which they felt had contributed to their ability to love. For several the interview became a time of discovery in which significant life experiences, which had sometimes been long forgotten, emerged from inner depths of memory. Other experiences, which had seemed quite unimportant at the time they happened, seen through the perspective of time, had great importance.

Due to respect for the individuality and freedom of each interviewee, the interviewer attempted to listen and to respond sensitively to the direction set by the interviewee. For instance, Norman Vincent Peale expressed his truths through stories of others who exemplified those truths, while Douglas Steere, a Quaker leader, expressed his truths by telling his own life story. The judgment was made to allow each interviewee his/her particular approach to the questions; many times their answers elicited new questions. The interviewees were advised to take as long as needed in answering each question.

Selection of Interviewees

After the decision to use the in-depth personal interview as the means for gathering information for this study, it was necessary to devise a method for selecting interviewees. Abraham Maslow said,

If we want to answer the question how tall can the human species grow, then obviously it is well to pick out the ones who are already tallest and study them. If we want to know the possibilities for spiritual

growth, value growth, or moral development . . . then we can learn most by studying our most moral, ethical or saintly people.¹¹

The challenge that confronted the investigator was how to determine or measure the quality of an individual's love. The assumption was made that there are as many ways of expressing love as there are individuals. One person might express love by writing a book, another by nursing an invalid, another by personal sacrifice, another by leading a movement. Some persons, such as Mother Teresa of Calcutta and Brother Roger of Taize, would be quite universally regarded as living examples of very loving human beings. Their ability to love has been validated by many persons who have been the recipients of that love. Brother Roger has reached out to many seeking pilgrims of the world. As a result, up to 10,000 people from all over the world gather at Taize, France, each Easter. Without knowing it, many come for the radiant love Brother Roger emanates. Mother Teresa also reaches out to comfort and to heal the rejected and the forgotten. Although her health is fragile, she travels the world to take to others the stories of forgotten and suffering people. For Brother Roger and Mother Teresa, the needs of others transcend any personal desires and needs.

In talking with others, the investigator learned that almost everyone has known or knows at least one person who has touched his/her life in a meaningful way, and who exemplifies an exceptional ability to love. For this reason, the decision was made to select interviewees on the basis of recommendations from others. According to Seltiz and Deutsch,

¹¹ Maslow, The Farther Reaches of Human Nature, 7.

The most direct method of selecting informants is to ask strategically placed administrators working in the area one desires to study to point out the most informative, experienced and analytical people.¹²

Those who were asked to make recommendations were trusted mentors of the investigator. They themselves have devoted their lives toward helping others, and their work and knowledge is closely related to the field of study in this project. The persons who are responsible for recommending the subjects to be interviewed are noted in the appendices. In addition several interviewees were selected by the investigator on the basis of their writings, which indicated an intimate personal knowledge of the subject of love. Finding interviewees who were able to verbalize their inner states of experience was of critical importance to the study. Names of all interviewees, accompanied by a brief biographical history, are listed in the appendices.

Many of the interviewees recommended are well known for their writings and for their life work. Every single person contacted by the investigator to participate in the study graciously agreed to do so. The interviews required the investigator to travel to places distant from California: Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., New York, Taize in France, Switzerland and Northern Scotland.

A total of nineteen in-depth personal interviews were conducted. In the selection of interviewees, a conscientious attempt was made to balance the study with both male and female voices. There were twelve men and seven women. The ages of the interviewees ranged from 34 to 93 years, with the majority falling into the age range from 50 to 70 years. Ten of the eighteen interviewees are published authors.

¹² Selltiz, et al., 56.

Six of these authors have written on the subject of love. Of the interviewees, four are psychotherapists, one is a rector of an abbey in Iona, one is a mystic, and ten are ministers, priests or teachers. Fourteen of the interviewees described themselves as Christians, one as Jewish, one as mystic, and one as Eastern.

Certain general criteria guided the selection of interviewees. These criteria included: (1) a deep concern for the well-being of others; (2) work dedicated to the betterment of humankind; (3) an ability to communicate in-depth emotional and spiritual experiences; and (4) traits of kindness, empathy, humility, sincerity, authenticity.

Interview Questions

The purpose of the interview questions was to provide a platform from which to dive into the depths of the human experience of loving, and to provide a standard but flexible structure to assist the interviewer in gathering data. Due to a limitation of time, the aim was to get to the essential in-depth questions as quickly as possible, still allowing time for the interviewer to establish rapport.

The interview questions were flexible and unstructured in order to provide maximum freedom to explore unexpected and valuable data. As mentioned earlier, idiographic investigation attempts to tap into deeper subjective feelings and experience in order to understand better the underlying perceptions and values that form the basis of the interviewee's understanding of love. This flexible structure "helps to bring out the affective and value-laden aspects of the subjects' responses

and to determine the personal significance of his attitudes."¹³ Persons' values or beliefs often determine their experience, hence what persons believe about unconditional love can be expected to shape their loving. In studies of persons' responses to Rorschach pictures, for example, investigators find that a person will see what he/she expects to see.

In contrast to the interview in which the subject is appraised in advance of the questions, the clinical interview is "concerned with broad underlying feelings or motivations or with the course of the individual's life experiences,"¹⁴ and the questions attempt to elicit a spontaneous response. This study has a particular focus, which is the human ability to love, so the interviewer directed the questions to elicit responses in this area. The respondent had freedom to express his/her own line of thinking regarding this subject.

This unstructured, spontaneous type of interview has both advantages and disadvantages. The potentiality of discovery is enhanced by the freedom. The difficulties arise in analyzing the complex data from such a great diversity of answers to questions. Each person has a unique approach to a question. One person might deflect the question and go in a new direction. Some persons are brief and explicit while others are verbose. One interviewee spent thirty minutes answering one question. It is difficult therefore, to analyze, categorize and compare the different answers.

Following is a list of the interview questions:

¹³ Selltitz, et al., 263-64.

¹⁴ Selltitz, et al, 266.

1. As a way of introduction, will you give a brief historical overview of your life, such as your age, education, marital status?
2. In reviewing your childhood, what would you recall as meaningful experiences, either painful or happy, which influenced your ability to love?
3. What does the word love mean to you?
4. Have you ever experienced what you believe to be a Transcendent, unbounded love?
5. Has your experience of loving changed over your lifetime? In what ways?
6. Do you believe you've grown in your ability to love? Have your feelings changed toward (1) yourself, (2) others, (3) enemies, (4) nature, (5) the unlovable, (6) God?
7. How has suffering affected your ability to love?
8. What events or persons have been most significant in influencing your ability to love?
9. What disciplines have been most significant in influencing your ability to love?
10. Some theologians and psychologists believe that love does not originate in the human psyche, but comes from a higher, ultimate source. What are your thoughts about this based on your personal experience?

Analysis of Research Data

The method of data collection and data analysis is based upon the Glaser and Strauss system of Grounded Theory. This method was chosen because it adapts itself well to an exploratory study and is sensitive to subjective research. In Grounded Theory, one attempts to gather data in a systematic way, and one seeks flexibility in allowing theories to emerge from the data itself. An exploratory study begins with a vaguely defined problem and moves toward the development of a well-defined

theory. The analyst is encouraged to be sensitive and thoughtful to what is happening in the data and to be free from the restrictions of pre-existing hypotheses and bias. As stated by Glaser, "Grounded Theory is based on the systematic generating of theory, that itself is systematically obtained from social research."¹⁵ It is a dual process of data collection and analysis and theory development.

These grounded theories that emerge must: (1) fit the data, (2) be relevant, (3) be workable, and (4) be easily modified as new data emerges. Further, they rely on the social psychology of the analyst and his/her knowledge of the literature, openness to discovery, freedom from bias, and wisdom about the data. The analyst's maturity, motivation, and life cycle interests are important factors in gaining theoretical sensitivity both to the collected data and to the emerging theories. The analyst is a human being and as such cannot be separated from the process of data collection and theory development.

A theory, to be workable, should be able to explain what has happened, and also, what is happening now and what will happen. For a theory to be relevant, the analyst must determine what is at the core of the research data by assertively searching for core problems and processes, and developing a core category. Data which does not fit must not be forced into preconceived categories, or selectively discarded. New categories can be designed and old categories redesigned to fit emergent data. Therefore, the fourth criterion of grounded theory, modifiability, is met. Recognizing that social processes are always in a state of change, and that new

¹⁵ Selltiz, et al., 2.

data outdates old data, grounded theory allows for continual and immediate correction.

In addition to continual modifications, grounded theory encourages, through a process of generation, the analyst to go beyond present data to define new problems and possibilities for future research. It assumes that the analyst is in a thinking mode, focusing on the generation of ideas. The analyst incorporates not only the immediate research data but also the theories and ideas of others in order to build on previous work and theories and to generate how these ideas fit an emergent theory. Using grounded theory, an analyst can begin with empirical, experimental, descriptive knowledge in order to conceptualize categories, determine what fits and is relevant, and discover underlying patterns. By this the analyst can transcend current thinking and develop new and substantive theories.

Coding and Selection of Core Categories

Coding is the procedure by which complex data is subdivided and placed in appropriate categories that can then be analyzed and compared. By a systematic line by line analysis of the data, the analyst can catalogue experiences, concepts, contexts and conditions. Glaser recommends using color coding to identify each category within the data. He also stresses the importance of writing memos in the margins as the data stimulates ideas in the analyst. He believes these ideas are critical to the generation of theory and are easily lost if not immediately noted. Both color coding and memo writing were used by this analyst.

In order to discover related categories, similarities and differences the analyst continually questions the data by asking: What does this incident indicate? What is happening in the data? Through systematic coding, analysis and comparisons, the analyst is able to determine the central theme or core category. The core category integrates all other categories.

The method of data analysis begins with the selection of categories that seem to interpret the underlying patterns of the data. Sub-categories emerge from the data, and the core category emerges from the many sub-categories. The analyst seeks to generate emergent categories which fit the data and are relevant to the formation of an integrated theory.

This method also recognizes that all human behavior is fluid and that patterns, processes and transitions are an innate characteristic of human life. In addition, just as the individual is always in a fluid state, so is the social context of family, community, and so on. Glaser uses the "Basic Social Process" (BSP) to focus on the changing processes and patterns of the human life. The BSPs are "theoretical reflections and summarizations of the patterned, systematic uniformity flows of social life which people go through."¹⁶ He differentiates between the basic social psychological process (BSPP) of human becoming, learning and relating to others, and basic social structured process (BSSP) of social communities. A BSSP is the fluid social structure within which the BSPP takes place. This study attempts to identify some of the underlying processes (BSP) in the development of the human ability to love.

¹⁶ Glaser and Strauss, 100.

Categories (Codes)

The following categories were selected in order to target key life experiences of the interviewees within their social contexts. The particular categories were selected as representing the broad range of factors associated in the literature with loving. These codes were used in the initial stage of the analysis. The final codes used as the analysis developed are detailed in Chapter 8. A chart of the codes and some explanation follows:

1. Basic Social Structured Processes (BSSP):
 - a. Family
 - b. Church

2. Relationships:
 - a. With Self
 - b. With Others
 - c. With Nature
 - d. With God
 - e. With Enemies

3. Basic Social Psychological Processes (BSPP):
 - a. Changes
 - b. Passages
 - c. Stages
 - d. Conversions

4. Means of Growth:
 - a. Disciplines
 - b. Prayer/Meditation
 - c. Study
 - d. Significant Persons
 - e. Significant events

5. Understandings Of:
 - a. Love
 - b. Transcendent Divine (God)
 - c. Suffering

6. Experiences:
 - a. Of Being Loved
 - b. Of Loving Another
 - c. Of Expressing Love

To explain the BSSP, the category of family gave the investigator a way to identify and analyze infant and early childhood experiences, parental and sibling relationships, influences of extended family and friends in order to discover those experiences which influenced the interviewee's ability to love. These were compared with other interviewees' experiences in order to learn if there were any similar patterns or predictable outcomes from certain life experiences. For instance, the question was asked of the data, how did those interviewees who had a neglected and deprived infancy handle this experience in order to grow into loving persons? Several interviewees had such early life experiences, and yet despite this, grew into loving persons.

In the category of Church, the analysis of each person's history revealed whether the parents had a religious orientation, and whether the church was a nurturing factor in promoting the maturation of love in the individual. In the category of community the questions asked of the interview material were: In what ways did the extended community influence the interviewees' ability to love? Were there particular individuals who became role models or who were important to the interviewee's learning to love?

The category of relationships, with the sub-categories of Self, Others, Nature, God, Enemies, provided a format for investigating several meaningful areas of human

relationship and from this analysis and comparison, to discover how loving individuals love in the totality of their life. For instance, do we find that some individuals are loving of others in an impersonal way such as in concern for distant peoples, while their own immediate and personal relationships are less loving? Do loving individuals love themselves as well as they love others? Do loving individuals have a personal, impersonal, or non-relationship with God? How do loving individuals regard their so called enemies? Is there some observable commonality among the interviewees?

In the "Category of Basic Social Psychological Processes," the subcategories of Changes, Passages, Stages and Conversion were selected for analyzing the life processes of loving individuals. Certain questions were asked by the investigator of the interview material in order to determine if there are basic stages of maturation in loving, certain critical transition points in the developmental process and necessary environmental and psychological conditions for developing the human ability to love.

The category of Means of Growth with its sub-categories was used in the analysis of the material to discern the most valuable tools and experiences by which individuals report they have grown in their ability to love.

The fifth category of Understanding of the Meaning of Love, of the Divine, of Suffering was for the purpose of gaining insight into the underlying value system for each interviewee, and how the value system of the individual had changed through the maturation process. After analyzing each interviewer's value system, it was compared with others to determine similarities and differences.

The last category of "Experiences," which was divided into three sub-categories, was devised in order to analyze the experiential reality of each

interviewee. This was based on an assumption that an intellectual understanding of love can be quite different from an actual experiential understanding. The question asked of the material was how closely related are an individual's intellectual understandings of love and the individual affective experiences they report?

The Glaser and Strauss method of Grounded Theory, using categories, sub-categories and core categories, is employed in Chapter 8 for analyzing the interview material. Prior to analysis, however, some description of the interview responses is offered to the reader so that the richness of detail will not be lost in analytic categories. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 report, through paraphrase and quotation, the interviewee responses to the interview questions.

Chapter 5

Report of Interviewee Findings

In reporting on these interviews, one cannot adequately express the wealth of wisdom and the depth of love that these interviewees exemplified. The researcher acknowledges, and expresses gratitude, to all the interviewees for their openness and honesty as they shared their gifts of knowledge and life experience.

The material used in chapters 5, 6 and 7 is taken from several hundred pages of interview transcripts. Additionally, in some instances material from interviewees' books is used to amplify a particular point. Of necessity, these excerpts are presented in condensation. Unfortunately the wealth of wisdom in the transcripts cannot be given in a verbatim manner, for each person has a valuable and unique way of expressing his/her spiritual truths. Due, however, to the limitation of space and time, the material has been paraphrased in order to make it more accessible to the reader. Themes recurring in individual interviews are compared and discussed in Chapter 8.

The interviewees were asked basically the same questions and were encouraged to elaborate and to follow their own personal direction in answering. One purpose of the questions was to stimulate the interviewee to personal introspection in a non-directive way. Several of the interviewees commented that

they had never before explored such questions in depth, and they expressed appreciation for the opportunity. Only those answers deemed most valuable for giving an insight into the interviewee's thinking and experience as related to the research issues of this study are reported. In the cases of confidential and sensitive material, the names of the interviewees are withheld at the discretion of the interviewer.

The following three chapters report on the interviewees' responses to the items on the questionnaire. The three questions reported in Chapter 5 provide the reader with background information on the interviewees. This includes reports of the interviewees' experiences of Divine Love and their understanding of the meaning of the word love. Names are withheld in the first section, on childhood experiences, because the material, which includes abuse and neglect, is sensitive and confidential.

Childhood Experiences that Influenced Ability to Love

One purpose of the interview questions, as has been stated, was to encourage subjective, in-depth exploration of the thoughts and feelings of the interviewees regarding the subject of love. The first question of the interview, which asked for a brief historical description of the interviewee's life, was to provide a general, historical background and to allow the interviewer time to establish rapport with the interviewee. This question elicited geographical, educational and vocational information, which is reported in "Biography of Interviewees" in the Appendix.

The second question was to elicit a more personal history of each interviewee's thoughts and feelings regarding his/her ability to love. This question was not intended to provide a deep psychoanalytic evaluation of early childhood, but was instead intended as a device to get a general reading of the quality of early life. The question was, "In reviewing your life, what would you recall as meaningful experiences, either painful or happy, which influenced your ability to love?" The answers which resulted from this question reflect some life-forming experiences of the interviewees as children; the experiences of the interviewees have ranged from physical and emotional nurture to physical and emotional abuse. The majority of the interviewees fall within the median range, experiencing both affection and neglect and rejection. Only two persons recall what might be described as ideal and nurturing early life experience.

One of the persons reporting an ideal early life experience says that she was born into a family of deep faith and love and was surrounded by loving people in a larger community of church. Her earliest memories are of kindness and love. This interviewee believes that people cared for her because they "loved me enough to listen." She was told at a little later age that at the time of her birth her mother had great difficulty, nearly dying, and many prayers were said on her mother's behalf. She feels that she "was loved into life," that there is a kind of love that can bring people into birth and into life. The name she was given means, "gift from God." This interviewee has had a sense throughout her lifetime that a love has been with her

wherever she is and in whatever circumstance. This interviewee knows that God loves her and feels that this has always been the case.

The other interviewee with a relatively happy childhood reports that after his father died, he and his mother lived with his grandparents on their farm. His grandparents were very loving toward him and taught him about the God of love in Wednesday night family prayer services. They modeled their love in the church community and people came to them for counsel. His grandfather taught the "Brotherhood Bible Class," and he would eavesdrop and learn. The childhood experience for this person was one of openness, trust and community. He always felt trusted and valued. This person says, "Much of what I am, I picked up from my grandfather."

One other interviewee, although his childhood was not ideal, says he did have close family relations, a feeling of unconditional love from grandparents and a basic knowing that he had a place in the family and was special. He says, "You knew you had a place, there was no need to prove yourself." This person grew up within a religious community, attending religious schools throughout his childhood and early adulthood, so that he had a sense of belonging within a larger community. This early childhood experience of community and family acceptance has given to this particular individual a desire for a monastic community in adulthood.

As a young child another interviewee recalls she was the mother of her family, that she mothered others, even her own mother. As a child, she had no sense of receiving love, but she had a sense of giving love and taking care of others. She says,

"I never had anyone mothering me, so therefore, through that lack, I over-mothered everyone else."

The victim of "abject abuse," another interviewee, was severely abused physically, psychologically and emotionally by both her birth mother and father. Her body became such a painful place that she began to feel parented by the "universe." She received comfort from some spiritual source outside herself and her spirit became more real than her body. Nature became her companion and friend. She experienced actually becoming a tree, or the earth or water during moments of communion. She says that she felt "nature as pure love."

Also suffering intense emotional abuse, another interviewee was treated as valueless. Her father was an alcoholic who verbally abused his family. This interviewee received no support, warmth, or caring and as a consequence of being unloved in the outer world, she turned to find the love within herself. She says, "Those experiences were meant to teach me that I hold within myself a universe of love." For her this interior universe of love is unlimited. As she grew, she felt unattached to outer reality and grounded in this unlimited, inner reality.

Two other interviewees, although not physically abused, describe emotionally painful childhoods. In one family, the parents were emotionally isolated from each other, and the underlying tone of the home was somber, cold and lifeless. Excessive control was exercised, and the child was valued on the basis of accomplishments, with no accomplishment ever enough. The mother was in a continual state of grief. The child's hope was someday to please the mother and father. During the father's slow

death process due to cancer, the interviewee was able to establish a close relationship with his father before the father's death.

The second interviewee tells of a brilliant father who was busy and remote, but had an explosive temper. Due to a spastic condition from a birth injury, the child was thought to be retarded. He recalls feeling a genuine love from his mother, and yet feeling alienated because he was raised by maids. A Stanford-Binet test which revealed he was not retarded, and a loving teacher helped him to grow toward health.

One interviewee, a child of missionary parents, describes a family centered in God, with parents whose primary concern was the mission field. He had a sense of belonging and safety within the family confines, but felt insecure, with low self-esteem, beyond the family. A brother with emotional problems caused great distress within the family. The interviewee was his brother's appointed care-taker, a situation which resulted in his public embarrassment in school. As a very young boy, he developed an intimate and personal relationship with God. He could talk with God, toward whom he felt warm, positive feelings.

One interviewee, an only child, felt unconditional love from both parents, who were also very loving toward each another. He is the one interviewee who speaks of a love relationship between the mother and father. He says, "A few days before my father returned from a business trip, my mother would do anything for me I asked, she was so happy." His parents taught responsibility, and although they expected a lot, they did not chide or demean him when he failed to live up to expectations. He feels they "wanted the best for him."

Another interviewee, the son of a minister father, speaks of a close family in which the parents loved their children. The family was very poor, "but good poor, clean, self-respecting, decent." The parents sacrificed for their children. He shares a memory of one Christmas when they went without themselves in order to get a second-hand bicycle for him and his brother. He remembers his parents with respect and love.

Five other interviewees report having a sense of being loved within a family community. These persons do not describe an ideal situation, but they did receive a sense of caring from at least one parent or other caregiver. All but two interviewees report varying degrees of loneliness, rejection and pain during early childhood. One person experienced intense frustration and rage toward his father. For all the interviewees, these feelings of pain, alienation and loneliness were intensified during the adolescent years. The majority of interviewees suffered either immediate pain from lack of love from a mother or father, or pain from feeling inadequate, unimportant, or outside the larger community.

The other interviewees fall in the median range in which both love and pain were experienced in childhood. For two of these interviewees the mental illness of a family member caused them to withdraw in lonely isolation and to seek God as a refuge. Another interviewee, an only child of a loveless marriage, sought affirmation and love through scholarly attainments. Unfortunately, no amount of accolades could fill the void created by sterile, uncaring parents. Another interviewee can recall

only one person in early childhood who demonstrated warmth and caring. She was a nurse who cared for him during an extended illness. One interviewee reports feeling loved by his mother and father, and yet the family suffered traumatic poverty and separation as the father sought work during the depression.

Most interviewees report childhood experiences that were neither all loving nor all non-loving, but were some degree of both. The majority report feeling unloved by at least one parent. In more extreme cases in which both parents were unloving, the child often felt love from a grandparent or other person, so that there was not a sense of total love deprivation.

Interviewees' Understanding of Love

The concept of love, as has been previously noted, cannot adequately or fully be defined. Its many dimensions and abstract nature make it difficult even to describe in explicit terminology. Each interviewee, in discussing his/her understanding of love, approaches the concept from a particular perspective. Just as a cut diamond has many facets that reflect light in different colors, so does the concept of love have many refracted beams. In their attempt to give form to their understanding of the meaning of love, interviewees reveal and discuss many dimensions of love. Still there is always more to be said. The Taoist is right; the "Tao that can be told of is not the

absolute Tao."¹ Love, like God, is beyond human consciousness to comprehend in its full nature.

In answer to the third question, "What does the word love mean to you?" interviewees give diverse and wide ranging answers. Several of the interviewees talk about love being an energy that goes beyond a feeling. Love as an energy is sensed as a presence or a space. Harold Bloomfield describes love as the most fundamental energy of creation. "On a physical level it feels like an exquisite vibration, an energy that leaves one feeling most alive, joyous and wise. There is a refinement of perception, a clarity, of being in a moment, a communion." He describes this love that is an energy as beyond personality and yet having presence. It is not like a person, but is a reality.

For another interviewee, this sense of presence is extremely supportive, protecting, nourishing, totally enhancing and accepting. This transcendent presence feels like God, a god that transcends the personal.

Martin Marty says that this energy is felt as a universal abundance and is always available whether we take it into ourselves or not. He describes this energy as a flow of love with a positive motion toward its goal in God, which also issues from its source in God.

Elia Wise describes this fundamental love energy as the founding vibrations of creation, a demonstration of goodness from which all other things are made

¹ Alan Watts and Al Chung-Liang Huang. Tao: The Watercourse Way (New York: Pantheon, 1975), 39.

relative. "It is the deep and the constant movement of the brook. All experiences are the colors that refract off of it, like off of the water in a brook when the light hits." This interviewee associates the fundamental vibrations with the collective sound of "OM," believed by some to express the primary vibration of creation. For her this is the vibration of love that permeates all existence. If one could hear, one would hear this rhythmic vibration in every living entity. This primal vibration of love encompasses all love and is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end of love that can be discovered in all relationships. "Love is the point of origin which goes forward and is manifested in every condition of being; it is the primary determinant, the founding source. From that given, and it is a given, all other things set up their relationships and relativities."

One person says that love is the only way to be whole and to be fully who one is, that love is coming into the totality of the whole of creation. A sense of the unity of the whole permeates a full state of love. This love is both the heartbeat and the breath of the universe. In love one is able to reveal his or her inner self and to express who one truly is. Love is a state of wholeness in which each tiny microcosm and each individual person are integral parts. If one is able, one can experience the communion of the whole and as a result of this experiences one's true essence.

Sarah Vettese describes love as a "magnificent energy field," and it is this energy field that flows in an unbounded ocean. As one is able, one can connect with this unbounded source of love, which is goodness, purity, and absolute love. Love, then, is the ability to receive this unbounded energy and to translate this into

practical ways of giving. Love is recognizing that every aspect of creation is love and that as one can open to this love emanating from every creature and every aspect, one can experience the universal energy that is understood to be love. Vettese says, "I experience this love when I completely let go of any attachment to my thoughts and surrender to the highest power, the highest, most magnificent energy field. This field is beyond the realm of my imagination."

Other interviewees, when asked what love means to them, have attempted to describe the attributes of love. The following is a brief summary:

Martin Marty speaks of love as that love which God has for God's creation, even when the creation denies God. For him, God is the original and final source of love. Marty also says that for love to be real, it must be spontaneous, unchanneled and free. It flows unexpectedly when one is not looking for it. Love that is given in response to demand is not love, but love that is true is effervescent and bubbles forth in instantaneous blinding flashes.

Marty believes that love is expensive because many times one must put aside one's own interests in order to attend to the other. Love is always ready to give to the beloved or the loved one as needed. Those persons who are established in self-centeredness, selfishness and ego are not capable of love. Setting aside one's own need in favor of the other's need is often costly.

Love also transcends self-engrossment and is able to see beyond the self and to truly see the other. This love can see often what others cannot see. This love is creative in that it creates in the other something that was not there before, and it has

the ability to perceive the value and the merit and the beauty of the other. When one is self-engrossed, one is not able to see others in their divine purity. Love is based on attentiveness, the ability to truly see what the artist sees with eyes that are particularly penetrating. The artist sees what others do not see. Inattention is the greatest killer of love. Lifting this veil of self-engrossment begins the process of opening the eyes to see the other.

Love is stronger than death for love enables one to go forward in affirming life in the face of death. Death remains the enemy of love but it is not the last word. Love defeats death, because love does not die when the beloved or the loved one passes on. Love continues beyond the grave and beyond death.

Eleanor DeTiger says that love is not an act but is a quality that enhances life. This loving quality has an investment in human beings and it gives all that anyone needs. Love is honoring that great creation of the Divine of which all are a part. In this love there is an abundance, that is free-flowing and giving whether one partakes of it or not. This love, further, is not personalized but is personally related through everything. A spiritual teacher reaching a high state of consciousness is able to see the infinite unity of life and to be open to this universal love. Persons established in this love, have an aura, even a radiance and become great sources of light to others.

David Hassel discusses self-centered love in contrast with other-centered love. The latter is characterized by relationships in which there is a "simultaneous and reciprocal affirmation between the lover and the beloved." There is a "perduring playfulness" as the mystery of love enables the beloved to grow in understanding,

imagination and sensitivity. In love, trust is based on the intelligent acceptance of the beloved and as this is "perdurably cumulative," the beloved is able to expand into other love relationships. "Such a person has an assurance, a trusting warmth, an alertness, an understanding receptivity for the need of others to love." This receptivity promises nothing but "un-self-centered attention and trustful respect." This total acceptance of the other has a liberating effect, healing, expanding both toward wholeness. There is a sacrifice of the self as the lover gives the totality of the self to the beloved. These then are the characteristics of other-centered love (love in the higher reaches); it is perdurably faithful, intelligent, expansive, liberating, wholesome and ultimately self-sacrificing.

According to Hassel, love transcends self-interest. In agape love one loves because it is the lover's intrinsic nature to love. Love is given without thought of return and without manipulation. Love is given beyond individual merits, or value, or attractiveness. Although love is reciprocal, experienced both in giving and in receiving, that love which is pure is given without thought of receiving. There is a vast difference between love that is given in order to be received back and that which is given spontaneously, without any thought of return but which, of course, welcomes return.

For Brother John, love involves a trust that allows one to realize that one is not the center of the universe. If one is able to trust and to know that one is loved, one is able to love more fully. It is when one dares to move out of one's own center of supreme interest and to know that the universe is basically good and that God is

to be trusted, that one can turn loose of control and know that love is not earned by merit, but is received through openness. As one opens to this universal flow, love bubbles over and overflows into all the dimensions of one's life. This spontaneous and natural love looks beyond surface qualities, aggressions and passions and sees into the real person. It is a natural generosity, a natural giving that overflows. Once one is able to open to the universal source and flow of love, there is never an insufficient amount of love. This love and trust mean a surrender to one's own destiny, a relinquishing of one's own wish for wanting things to be a certain way. It is trusting that as one opens to love, one's destiny will be fulfilled and there will be no need to do more.

Arlene Nesbitt understands love as the experience of coming totally into the whole: "Love is the way for God and us to become. I am not only a microcosm but I am a part of the whole. When I get into that state, I can't single out any one part. In that state [of communion with the whole] one experiences one's true essence, who one truly is." She believes that all of life is evolving and through love we move toward universal union. Love for her permeates all of creation from the sub-atomic particles. Love is the juice. Through love one knows heaven on earth. The whole process of birth and death is to know who one is so that God can be God's true Self. Love and God are synonymous. Love provides the opportunity to unfold and to reveal oneself. Through love one is able to forgive and to realize that the other person understands this forgiveness. The law of love is a spiritual law and does not operate in the same way that physical laws or psychological laws operates. In

spiritual love there are miracles. When one is operating by spiritual law, or the law of love, one no longer has to try, one just listens and trusts. Life is no longer a struggle.

Kathy Galloway understands the meaning of love to be a state of being. She quotes Charles Shultz, "Happiness is a dog lying in the sun." She says that love is not only a state of being, but is a catalyst by which people are able to expand and to be affirmed. As one learns to love, one learns to trust. Freedom comes from loving and trusting because one is not required in a love relationship to be "something else, or someone else." In a love relationship, one is loved for oneself. The love is not possessive nor coercive, but it is appreciative. One who has grown in the capacity to love is able to appreciate the simplest things such as the sun shining. The fruit of true love, then, is joy, and this joy becomes a state of being for those who are able to love.

Roy Fairchild understands love to mean people. Loving is living so that the full potential of the other can be realized. He feels that not all persons love in the same way, and that part of love is accepting the differences without classifying them hierarchically, with some types of love higher and some lower. He does not subscribe to the ladder concept of spirituality in which one moves from one rung to another and which "forever puts some people outside." The quiet worker in the ghetto is just as valuable as a Mother Teresa. For him, love accepts and enjoys the differences; however, love can be dangerous, for one can never anticipate where "it is going." Loving involves a willingness to take a risk. Love involves being available to the

other, not just in physical presence, but in the deepest sense. It means affirming the other in his or her personhood and believing in him or her, saying, "Yes, you can do it."

Thomas Keating believes that there are different kinds of love. There is immature and self-centered love, but as one moves along a spiritual journey, one moves toward participation in Divine Love. Divine Love is always giving. Shines on the just and the unjust, forgives, and is manifested by the father of the prodigal son. Above all, Divine Love the passion of the death of Christ, which is God's sacrifice out of love for human people, and for their human predicament. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize levels of love.

In a spiritual journey, as I understand it, love is moving toward the kind of participation in Divine love that we call Charity or *caritas*, which is the Latin for the Greek word agape, and this always refers to participation in Divine Love. Growth is trying to develop or open ourselves to Divine Love, so that we, at some point, can love with the kind of love that God has for us which is a kind of unlimited passion and mercy.

Love is growth that attains the purity of love that God has given. This is the invitation of the Gospel, "to love one another as I have loved you." Through this unlimited love, one comes to a place of choice, a choice for God, which remains no matter what the opposition, persecution or anything else. So this is the love that conquers all things, the invincible love of God that we can only attain, little by little, by letting go of our self-centered motivation.

For Gerald May love refers to the energetic and creative nature of God. God is love, and love has to create to be love. This creative love forms the diversity of the

universe and all the people. Within the separateness that comes from the great diversity of creation is a longing for union with others and reunion with God. The core of human nature is to seek love, to seek union with one another and reunion with God. We are "created in love, by love and for love." This love is the purpose of life itself and "what we are here for." Nothing truly counts except love. This love is not only felt toward a loving Creator, but is manifested in our inner relations with other persons. Such love takes the form of self-sacrifice, compassionate action, caring, patience, willingness to refrain from one's own ego a bit to help another. We grow in the ability to love as we learn to open to pure Divine Love. This Divine Love is then expressed outwardly in relationship with other people.

Interviewee Experiences of a Transcendent Love

In answer to question number four, "Have you ever experienced what you believe to be a transcendent unbounded Love?" all of the interviewees say that they have; yet these experiences are individually unique. Several speak of this unbounded love as being experienced through other human persons. Some speak of prayer or meditative moments of inner quiet when a sense of a Transcendent Presence is felt. Others describe a state of conscious awareness even in the midst of their activity. For some, this sense of an Unbounded Presence grows as they progress on the journey of their lives. A few of the interviewees recall illuminating moments of such an

intensity that they continue as vibrant memories throughout their lives. The following are excerpts of the interviews:

Brother John speaks of experiencing Unbounded Love through the community of Taize, in which the brothers love one another in a way of acceptance. The community has great diversity, with persons from different cultures and denominations; yet these persons are able to see beyond the surface diversity to feel something for one another that has a universal quality. The love of others is based not simply on congenial characteristics but on a deeper recognition of universal bonds. One becomes more tolerant, more patient, more understanding and more appreciative of others as this universality of persons is experienced. One is more able to transcend the external qualities and to perceive deeper qualities in the other person. The presence of this Unbounded Love, or God, enables one to grow beyond oneself. This interviewee has experienced from other individuals a kind of goodness or generosity that bubbles over, overflows into all the dimensions of their lives. "In people whose relationship with God is authentic, you can see their light. It is a radiance that overflows."

Jitka Slavik also speaks of such an experience of Divine, Unbounded Love that was channeled through another person, her spiritual teacher in India. What impresses her about him as a channel of love is his absolute integrity and his way of dealing with everyone with extreme warmth, love and clarity; he extends these qualities to everyone who comes into his presence. This devotion and self-evidence are unusual. She describes the feeling that comes through her spiritual teacher as

a sense of complete trust, of coming home or being at home, of wishing strongly to live a good life and to address the question, "What can I do with my life? It is most difficult to describe because it is something that has to be digested through and through and no one can really give it out because it loses what it is."

Douglas Steere speaks of being led by two or three friends to prayer meetings when he was in his early twenties. He remembers that he began to feel love through the prayer meetings, which were primarily meetings of silence. Through the silence of these meetings, he experienced a new level of freedom. He speaks of moving from a state of confusion in his philosophy studies toward a sense of God's presence. As he reviews his life, he can see the thread of this inner guide leading him throughout his life. Over the years, he has learned to trust the guidance of this inner Unbounded Love. At critical times in his life when he has turned to and relied on this Presence, he has found himself guided in certain directions.

David Hassel says that he has had experiences of a Transcendental Presence in his life. He has experienced this through his relationships with others and "occasionally deep inside myself." He experiences at times a sense of being loved, and in receiving this love, he feels more able to love others. As he learns to listen, he hears a gentle voice of guidance. His college goal was to become a chemical engineer, but as he progressed, he heard a gentle interior voice saying, "You haven't decided about not being a priest." Gradually, he knew, "This voice was calling me to priesthood. I had no doubts that the Lord was gently leading me." Along with this sense of a personal relationship, he has felt a deep attraction to Christ. He sees this

deep attraction to Christ in others. The attraction is so strong that people give up everything to follow it. Through communion with this Inner Presence, "You realize your weakness, your fragility as well as your strengths, and you learn compassion for one another through the experience of your own defects."

One time, during what he describes as a "peak experience," he was aware of the personal presence of Christ loving him, saying to him, "Now, you are home." Every detail of that moment is permanently etched in his mind. Over his lifetime, such experiences have strengthened and undergirded his faith. At other moments, a friend or a spiritual guide has been the voice used by God to communicate, to chasten or to bring to awareness a dimension of a reality that he did not see. One friend in particular he recalls as the voice of "tough love," encouraging him to look at his blind spots.

Elia Wise, an educator and one who describes herself as an "old soul," says that at about the age of four, she experienced being parented by the universe. Her life has been an ongoing dialogue with "the universe" and the depth of that dialogue has depended upon her availability to it. She experiences herself as open to the universal source, and from this she can understand dimensions beyond her conscious learning. She says that whenever she hears a new thought, she is quickly inside of it and the new thought becomes known territory, no matter what the topic is. She has had this intimate relationship and sense of universal love for her entire life. A victim of child abuse, she attributes her emotional and psychological survival to this connection. She describes an experience at age four in which for the first time she

became aware of identifying with her body. Before that time, she feels she was an energy more than a body. She has a sense of having been in a universal kind of place, and then suddenly consciously realizing she had to identify with her body and become a concrete, localized person. She has retained throughout her life the sense of being attuned with the universal energy. In the experience of becoming localized in the human body, she is aware that she was not seen by others as a "presence, or an energy, or a spirit, but as an object. They did not know who I truly was It was frightening and shocking to me to realize that I was going to be related to as an objective phenomenon instead of a presence of an energy or a spirit." She understood at that moment that the only companionship of being truly known is to be found somewhere else, in the Universal Presence. "I realized that the only real roots I had were staying in attunement with that." This has given her a sense of being in two places at once, in a universal field and yet also in a human body. She has spent many years integrating body and spirit, through communing with nature, singing, dancing, hiking and walking. She talks of feeling completely protected "in a love that I couldn't always quite feel, but I could know."

Norman Vincent Peale says he has experienced the love of God a few specific times, although he believes a believer is always in God's love. He has felt the Divine Love when trying to help a person in need, and in personal sorrow or crisis. He believes that the more open one is to the spiritual, the more of the Divine nature one takes on. He feels that love is therapeutic, that it often cures. Peale states that it is his belief that when one has the true, indwelling of the Spirit of Christ, that

person becomes a loving person. And it is not possible to truly love in the highest spiritual sense apart from a personal relationship with God.

Peale always makes it a practice to send loving thoughts to an audience just before he is introduced as a speaker, and he has had many experiences of people affirming that they have felt a power in an audience. He feels this practice is important to his ministry, and he never fails to send what he calls "love thoughts" to every audience, whether it is under secular or religious auspices.

Thomas Keating has experienced this Unbounded Love as an on-going, ever-present reality. This Divine Love is always available to each person, and by one's decisions to invite this love into one's being, one reduces the obstacles that prevent it. The human person has an important role. Human persons have a receptive apparatus which translates this Divine Love into human expression. Because of the false self's ("the constellation of prerational reactions . . . in opposition to the true Self")² emotional programs, it is difficult for one to face obstacles to the receptivity of Divine Love. The impediment of false self-identification prevents one from experiencing the fullness of God's love. As one is faithful and sincere through practice and desire, purification is made possible through Divine Therapy. As one becomes more clear, the presence of God is felt more completely. This person has experienced Divine Love growing more dynamic in his life as he has become more available and open to it. He experiences the presence of God as intimate, tender,

² Thomas Keating, Open Mind, Open Heart (Amity, N.Y.: Amity House, 1986), 128.

loving and protective. God's presence invites him to generosity and to love. His experience of this union with Divine Love is different from the spiritual experience of St. Teresa of Avila in ecstatic moments of absorption. For him it is more a sense of belonging. The transforming process comes through "hanging out with God." The experience of this Divine Love is an on-going experience, not a particular ecstatic moment.

Sirah Vettese speaks of her experience of love from a higher Divine source as a surrender into the highest power, the highest, most magnificent energy field. This field is one that is beyond imagination, and her experience is one of catching the wave that flows into an unbounded ocean of love. She says, "It is an experience of connecting my soul, my innermost powers, my innermost power source, to that which is Divine, which is only goodness itself, which is pure, holy, absolute love." She explains that the limitation that she feels in love is the inability to express the unboundedness of pure love. When she meets a barrier inside herself, she is reminded of this unbounded connection to God, the Source, and she has trust that she can climb over the existing wall that separates her. She experiences that unbounded love in everything and everyone, seen and unseen. She can experience it in a flower, in looking at the bright yellow, radiant petals. She can experience it in moments of communion with other persons. She speaks of being able to stand outside of herself, of being both connected and unconnected. She says, "Even as I speak here now, I feel that I have a strong sense of myself, and at the same moment, a reverence for that ultimate surrender into God." She speaks of an important peak

experience of the Virgin Mary that came to her as a vision in which she saw the Virgin's face as a beam of light. She says, "I felt like I was everything. I felt like her child and I felt like her. I felt connected to God, to Mother Earth, to myself as mother, to the mother of God, or God the mother." She says that it was an experience of personal love, that this love cannot be forced.

Harold Bloomfield experiences Divine Universal Love as he opens to the unbounded field of energy. He experiences the aliveness and joy in that moment, and speaks of both giving and receiving simultaneously. He also experiences Divine Love in moments with another person through their eyes, through their smile, through the awareness of communion. He has felt this same heightened awareness of communion with God. In fact, he finds it easier to feel adoration and to sustain love for the Divine than to have this love in an intimate, human relationship. No blocks exist in God's giving and receiving love, but with another human being, one is capable of bringing forth the blocks or fears in oneself or in the other person. For him, love is most complete when it is both giving and receiving in the moment. On the level of Divine Love, he says he feels a profound love. Although the love is personal, it is also indifferent, and inevitably comes to teach him that he is the creator of his own experience. He also speaks of experiencing Divine Love in moments of great need or confusion. He is aware of moments that love is being sent to him, but he does not know what to do with it, or he is afraid or not ready. Those are the limitations that he sets from his side.

Arlene Nesbitt, when asked about her experience of a Transcendental Unbounded Love, says that she has felt this many times. In fact, she feels this Presence all the time and can get in touch with it whenever she wants to. For her it feels like being blessed. This Presence is extremely supportive, nourishing, protecting, totally enhancing, and accepting of her as she is. It is empowering. It is never failing, totally accessible, always there. Sometimes it feels like God, a god that transcends the personal. Most often she feels God through angels. She can hear angels, and these angels are the highest part of herself and they allow her to transcend her own mind. When she is in touch with these angels, miracles can occur and transformations take place. Miracles are anything that enhances the whole. A miracle can be a small thing, a touching. Miracles always have to do with love. She has come to appreciate that all that has happened in her life has had a purpose. For this she feels a deep gratitude. She feels she can trust and is relieved of all personal goals.

Kathy Galloway says that she experiences Transcendent, Unbounded Love "all the time." She says that much human love is transfused with the Divine. For her, this love is any love which puts itself out without thought of receiving back. This human love, infused with the Divine, makes people open to one another, to receive one another. The Divine works through people, through imagination and creativity. This love also makes one more vulnerable.

Roy Fairchild, as a youth, experienced conversion during a church camp experience. He felt illumined by Rom. 12:2: "Be not conformed to this world but be

transformed by the renewal of your mind that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." This illumination of Scripture, coupled with the friendship of the fellowship, resulted in a transformation that changed the direction of his life. As a result, he entered the ministry. From this point, he "really felt Christ as a companion." At this summer retreat, he came to have a vision of a new kind of world in which people care for one another and offer meaningful support. Much later in life he had another life transforming experience through a dream that he describes as a "mysterium tremendum." From this dream he realized Christ had been trying to rebuild his life and he had been doing his own building.

A married couple, Dorothy and Douglas Steere, discuss experiencing Transcendent Divine Love in terms of their own love relationship, which has spanned six decades. They have felt the presence of God within their relationship, and this has grown stronger as they lived together. As the knowingness of this presence has grown, their love for one another has deepened. This presence became the referral point upon which they have always counted. As this Divine Love grew in their lives, their faith and trust in each other also grew. This trust gives to each the freedom to have meaningful relationships with others of both sexes.

Love, for Ross Snyder, means respecting and cherishing the other person. "Love is a cherished delight in the fullness of life of the other person." It involves trust, and to love at the highest level requires one "to be integrity," not just to "have integrity." It means that one relates spiritually as well as emotionally and physically. True love makes each person more responsible and committed to his/her own value

system. When love is true, it endures; it outcasts hardships and helps one to live through catastrophe. "Love steps up a person's spirited experience" and keeps making life fresh. Love brings a radiant glimmer of light to the eyes when the loved one comes into view. Love is felt as deep appreciation for the other. "Love, in the deep sense we are now talking about, is the irreducible element which makes you a human being. It is an important measure of a person's greatness."³

Love is the nature of God expressed in the world. This love, which is of God, does not seek some particular return, but expresses love because expression is love's true nature. One can love only in relationship with other human beings. The message of religion should be to create a Beloved Community in which love is manifest. Our challenge is to "become magnificently human," and to build a "Beloved Community."

From the answers of the interviewees given in the last section, a group of characteristics of human love emerges. One may note the diversity of answers to this question. There are few answers which describe the same qualities of love. Chapter 8 offers an analysis of this diversity and also a list of the defining characteristics of love which are drawn from the material.

Equally interesting, all interviewees report some experience of Divine or Transcendent Love. Here also is a great diversity of experience. Some experience Divine Love as an impersonal energy field, while others report a personal sense of

³ Ross Snyder, On Becoming Human (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), 28.

a loving presence. These various responses are analyzed and compared in Chapter 8.

The following chapter examines interviewees' responses to the questions on how their experience of love toward self, others and God has changed over time.

Chapter 6

Report of Interview Findings

Love and Growth

One objective purpose of this research is to investigate the experience of mature love in the upper reaches of human possibility in order to draw some descriptive characteristics of this type of love. Another purpose of this study is to determine if people can grow in their ability to love, and if so, to show how the quality of love changes toward self and others. This chapter summarizes the interviewees' experience with the growth of love. It is critical for our human knowledge to know if the ability to love is an inherent human possibility, and if it is, under what circumstances and by what means does it mature? If to love is natural and inherently human, then we, as educators, cannot afford to be casual in regard to its development. Is it not as important to learn to love as it is to learn to read and to write?

The following report is excerpted from the interview transcripts, and where noted, from the interviewees' written works. The question asked of the interviewees is, "Do you believe that you have grown in your ability to love?" If the interviewee responds affirmatively, he/she is asked to reflect on how his/her love has changed. All

but two persons answer affirmatively. For the two uncertain respondents, their understanding of the meaning of love has changed over time, so that they now judge themselves by a very mature concept of love.

This chapter presents answers to these two questions: Do you believe you have grown in your ability to love? Have your feelings changed toward (1) yourself, (2) others, (3) enemies, (4) nature, (5) the unlovable, and (6) God?

Roy Fairchild finds that his ability to love has changed over his lifetime. He expresses this change using Gordon Allport's term, "functional autonomy of motives." He explains that a person may begin an action with a certain motive. One may begin to care for his lawn to keep neighbors from complaining, and then discover a deep enjoyment in soil and plants. The motive then changes from pleasing the neighbors to caring for plants. Trusting this possibility for transformation in oneself and in others inspires the sense of hopefulness.

Another area of change for Fairchild has been in learning to listen to others. He was influenced at the University of Chicago by Carl Rogers, who taught that if you listen in depth to another person, things are activated in that person that he/she does not know are there. Fairchild personally experiences this as true; therefore, listening in depth is very important to him. For him to love is to be present, to be available to the other person. Where this will lead is not certain, but the listener learns as much as the speaker, he believes.

In addition to changing motivations and in-depth listening, Fairchild has increasingly appreciated the differences of people: their varying temperaments, likes

and dislikes, which result in different ways of seeing things. Some persons, he understands, are intuitive while others are analytical. Some persons express love with their hands, others with their minds. He resists the hierarchical evaluation of persons that makes some more valuable than others. To him this is a negation of Grace.

This acceptance and openness to others has extended to himself. Growing in love has meant learning to love himself, accepting his dark side, as well as his side of light. He is now comfortable with this fact that he is an intuitive, introverted person and feels less need to compare himself with others and drive himself in accordance with some cultural norm or standard. He also is listening more to himself and following his inner directive, expanding his undeveloped side by listening to music and reading novels that he has always been too busy to enjoy. There is a sense of peacefulness in his pursuits. The pressure is eased.

Along the spiritual journey, Fairchild is now less vulnerable to those who might dislike him. As he has accepted himself, he has accepted the fact that some will disagree with him or criticize him. He feels neither the need nor the desire to change their opinions. In this process he has learned the importance of discrimination, realizing that some people are trustworthy and desirous of friendship while others are not. He now seeks a mutuality in friendships.

Fairchild talks of nature and his experience of the abstract intellectual pursuits of earlier years now enriched by a deepening awareness and appreciation of nature.

Inspired by the book Fearfully and Wonderfully Made,¹ he has felt a sense of awe and wonder at the intricacies of the human body. He has experienced the growing sense of presence in the moment; he feels a deep appreciation and sensitivity to all of nature.

Morton Kelsey says that his experience of loving has changed "infinitely" over his lifetime. As a child he needed to receive love, to be cared for. As he grew, he realized an emerging desire to give, to return that which he had received. Along with this emerging desire to give back, has been an increasing awareness that, "love had to be the central focus of my life if I was to be in any way a follower of Jesus Christ and a mature person." As he gains "new insight into the reality of the cosmic quality of love," he now understands love to be the "central motivating force in reality." This is the love that is expressed in the Gospel. It is the only power that can deal creatively with evil.

Kelsey's experiences in graduate school and seminary were arid and intellectual. During this period his search for "the loving centrality of the universe" was unfulfilled and his growth in love frustrated. It was some years later during an enlightening "peak" experience that he received transforming insight. He saw himself "acting like an immature little child," failing to give what he should to his closest relationships. He experienced in the revelation that he did not love unconditionally, that although he was a parish priest, he did not understand the central message of

¹ Paul Brand and Philip Yancey, Fearfully and Wonderfully Made (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980)

Christianity, that God is unconditional love. The words from the Prayer of Saint Francis, "Let me seek not to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love," became revealed to him. He realized his purpose was to understand, to love others and forget himself. This "miracle" began a transformation of his life and relationships.

Another major insight into the cosmic quality of love came through a reading of Faust and listening to the last sections of Faust set to music in Mahler's Eighth Symphony. This is "one of the most glorious expressions, literally and musically, of the forgiveness and wonder, the joy and growth, the peace and love of heaven, which wishes to redeem and transform us." Also, learning about the near-death experience of Henri Nouwen opened new understanding for Kelsey of the "unconditional love at the center of things which precedes us on death."

As Kelsey has matured in love, his consciousness of social structures that crush and enslave people has deepened. He now believes that to do nothing to relieve the suffering is not love and his concern includes those who suffer in different lands. However, he acknowledges that his way to love is to write what he knows about unconditional love. If he responds to every need of suffering to which he is exposed, he is then unable to adequately fulfill this call of writing. For him it is important to stay tuned in to his particular way of expressing love.

As he has grown in the ability to love over his lifetime, his acceptance and care for others has deepened. Having received unconditional love in "any agony or pain, in stupidity or folly," he feels in no position to judge others. He defines an

enemy as one who dislikes him, and daily he prays for his enemies. Anger, vengeance or retribution are not adequate answers, in particular, unprocessed anger, which is the violent expression of naked, unreflected feelings that explode like a bomb. Such unprocessed anger is never love. Through counsel with a trusted friend or therapist, it is possible to understand the underlying source of anger. Working honestly with anger, accepting it, expressing it in appropriate ways, working it through are all necessary for growth toward wholeness and love.

Kelsey's relationship with God has deepened as he has grown in love. Although his academic days were spiritually sterile, he did call upon "the living Christ" when he experienced darkness and despair in his life. Thus, he has known the supportive and rescuing benefits of unconditional love. "I know that the center of the universe is with me, that the living Lord is real and that life is worth living," which is the message of the Gospel.

Brother John of Taizé speaks of his personal experience of growing more loving as corresponding to what Brother Rogers describes as "the heart becoming more all-encompassing." As one grows, one expands into a more universal acceptance of others; prejudices are gradually lost; one becomes more open and tolerant toward all people. He says, "I'm not certain love grows in depth or in strength since the very young can experience an intense love and children can be universally generous in their love. Perhaps that love is something children have and lose and then get back again as loving adults." A youth of sixteen has a natural enthusiasm "built-in" that is perhaps related to physical glandular changes, while a

mature loving individual "radiates a deeper enthusiasm." He adds, "Someone like Pope John XXIII radiates a love that comes from a spiritual source, that is, an overflow of goodness."

As one grows in love, one begins to be more attentive to the other person, to look beyond the problems, unlovable qualities, aggressions, to see the real person. "Love is rooted in a deeper level, not over-affected by surface things. One feels more patient, more tolerant. When one becomes rooted in a deeper reality, there is a goodness, a kindness that just overflows into all dimensions of life."

Brother John speaks of a growing sense of a deep inner peace and joy that accompanies the growth of love. This peace and joy are not always accessible and there are periods of desolation or emptiness, but one knows "that deep down there is a love which isn't human, which is God's presence in us." One is reminded of the deep calm of the ocean underlying the surface waves and storms.

Brother John has experienced, as he has grown, much less dependency on exterior or interior signs of God's presence. He has experienced more openness to the unknown, to what the moment may bring. This openness to the unknown, to God, requires relinquishing control, and trusting that "this is the road upon which God has placed you." He says that when you are starting your journey, there seem to be many differences, but as you progress, you begin to see a unity. As you go deeper into realities, you begin to understand that the differences are "different angles of approaching the same thing. Perhaps that is why the Gospel says God is

love . . . because it is the one word that relates to everything." Growing in love means, for Brother John, "to let God's Spirit more and more take over our lives."

Father Thomas Keating acknowledges different stages of love reflecting different places on his spiritual journey. On that journey, he has experienced love (eros) that seeks return or reward and agape love which seeks no return or reward. As he has understood it, the spiritual journey is a movement toward participation in Divine Love or agape love. Divine Love is unlimited compassion and mercy, always giving and forgiving, shining on the just and the unjust. To grow in love, he has had to accept his limitations and realize that he was missing inner resources, in effect, was poverty stricken spiritually. As a consequence, he has learned to depend more and more on Divine assistance and grace. Growth for him has meant learning to open to Divine Love so that eventually and more frequently he might be an expression of that love which is all-giving and beyond violence. Keating has realized that to grow in Divine Love, he must remain steadfast in his choice for the God of love, regardless of persecution or opposition. This requires letting go of self-centered, self-seeking, self-serving motivation. It requires humbling oneself through self knowledge, of gradually disengaging from infantile and fallible perceptions and of working through the toxic social programs that are stored in the psyche.

As Keating has journeyed the spiritual path, he has grown more loving toward himself. Even as he falls short of his ideals, he accepts his limitations and is more neutral toward himself: less angry, less subject to guilt feelings. "As true and self-giving love grows, emotions tend to be less dominating and one isn't pushed around

by them." Self-knowledge implies accepting the dark side of one's personality. The more one accepts this, the less one is able to judge others harshly. One realizes that all people share the human condition: imperfection and emotional pain.

Keating's feelings toward nature have changed also. "The experience of Divine Love as a conviction begins to extend to everything that God loves, and so one begins to perceive the Divine Presence not only in oneself but in other people and in nature." It is possible also to develop intuition, to see with x-ray eyes that God is mysteriously present at the deepest levels in all life. Even in cases of suffering, one's faith entrusts the situation to God and to God's purpose. As one grows in love, the pleasures in the great beauties of nature remind us of the goodness of God. One becomes more responsible, wanting to share the bounties of nature with others and to safeguard them for the next generation.

For Keating, growth includes knowledge as well as love. In his spiritual journey his "sense" of God continues to expand and he understands ultimate reality (God) to be infinite potentiality. He experiences a growing sense of wonder and awe that God is present in everything down to the least photon, yet God is also transcendent to time and matter. God is at once personal and impersonal, infinite, ineffable and incomprehensible to the human mind. He feels a growing sense of humility and a growing sense of honesty with himself and with God. As he experiences a deeper honesty, his trust and confidence that God and love will heal him grows.

Keating defines transformation as a restructuring of consciousness rather than a set of mystical experiences. This restructuring enlarges the capacity to be aware of God's permanent Presence as a caring, nurturing, loving and protective Presence. As he has become increasingly aware of this loving, protective presence, he has experienced a growing peace that is based on a confidence in God's presence. This peace is beyond feelings, so that one is not overwhelmed by joy or sorrow. Joy is not so much the emotion of joy, although that may be present also, but this joy is the fullness of joy which is bliss, rooted in the rock of God's faithful love. "Unlimited happiness comes from freedom from emotional domination."

Keating believes that each individual has inner emotional and psychological blocks to the full reception of Divine Love. These blocks include negative imprinting, life-inhibiting values, traumas of pain and selfish programs for happiness, programs that must be worked through in the "patient course of the discipline of love, loving others and loving oneself." Through the discipline of prayer and meditation, "the divine psychotherapy is initiated and this consists of an increase in the inner light that God gives to see the dark side of our personalities, the motivations and afflictive emotions under the influence of the false self." Gradually as these blocks are removed and one's identification with a limited and inadequate self image is relinquished, one experiences more of God's love. In this process, that energy which was used to maintain certain attitudes and dispositions is transmuted into energy for serving and loving others and God.

Gerald May, when asked if his ability to love has changed over his lifetime, hesitates to answer affirmatively. He says, "I am a lot more aware of how unloving I am. My understanding of love has grown. Earlier in my life I would not have said that love is the only thing that counts and that's what we are here for." May's understanding is that the energetic essence of God is love, and that this love finds expression in human relationships. It is expressed in many forms such as self-sacrifice, patience and compassion, and it grows through more interior openness to Divine Love.

God's love is creative, all pervasive like air, available at each moment, inexpressible. May speaks of the human longing for reunion with God, and of his own growing desire to be aligned with this love. When he is most aligned, he feels more compassionate and kind. For him, "Growing in love is the same thing as growing in open relationship with God. Agape is an expression of divine power in creation. It must be manifested through human beings, but never by them."² May is not certain whether or not he has grown in his openness to express this Divine Love.

May has, however, experienced a growing love for himself. He has realized this love through his relationships with others, through his sense of belonging to the human community. In an enlightening experience while watching people in a shopping mall, he became aware of each unique individual living his/her life story in

² Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 168.

a very special way. This awareness of the value of others, of seeing others and himself as an integral part of the whole, has been a growing consciousness for him.

He has also had a growing understanding that each person will be judged on love, "that if you are going to measure anything at all, it is love." This love is deeper and beyond the feelings of the body or the words of the mind. May believes that the finiteness of our understanding, due to our humanness, limits us to more expressible, manageable emotions and constellations of behavior that we call love, but real love is beyond feelings and words. Real love is inexpressible.

May has known occasions when he loved others, particularly his children, no matter what they had done; yet he does not call this unconditional love. He believes that for love to be unconditional, it must be consistent love no matter what the circumstances. As an example, May recalls the time when an intruder entered his house; on one level he felt compassion and on the other he said, "I'd punch him out at the first opportunity." Although he admits that he may have grown interiorly in compassion for others, because his behavior in certain situations has not changed, he questions his ability to express unconditional love. He has found that there are constructive ways to deal with threatening or irritating situations such as honest communication and sharing of feelings. If, however, the threat is too menacing for rational verbal talk, he may react more irrationally. Now he is learning to separate threatening behavior from the true self, finding even violent criminals lovable at times. He does lack patience for the egocentrics who build their self-image at any cost to self or others. He is impatient with people who feel sorry for themselves: "I

don't feel loving toward these people at all." He thinks that pride or a false self-image is a real obstacle to love.

May speaks of the progressions of love in his book Will and Spirit.³ Infants experience a narcissistic love concerned with survival that is related to meeting their own needs.⁴ School-age children learn how to give and receive filial love,⁵ and adolescents come in contact with erotic and genital love as they enter elementary stages of autonomy and independence. As one grows, these ways of loving become integrated. However, May argues against a stage or developmental theory, saying that agape love or unconditional divine love can intersect any age, that love does not develop in a hierarchical progression, that a "wise old sage can be derailed by a sudden erotic passion or narcissistic indulgence."⁶ Experiencing agape love is "not a function of personal growth or human development," but requires sacrifice of one's autonomous self-image. The human encounter with Divine Love is not a personal achievement but is an experience initiated by Grace. "Narcissistic, erotic and filial love support and maintain self-image, whereas agapic realization destroys it."⁷ May believes that although self-knowledge and maturation in loving are worthy human aspirations, they cannot induce the realization of agape love. Agape love is Divine

³ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 164.

⁴ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 169.

⁵ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 170.

⁶ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 169.

⁷ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 170.

Love. The most that humans can aspire to is receptivity and openness to this Divine Love. "Agape love can never be, in the most remote sense, our personal achievement. As in the case of unitive experience--which is of course the human encounter with divine love in its most direct form--we cannot make it happen."⁸

John Cobb expresses the belief that his ability to love has changed over time. As a child he felt secure and comfortable in the home of his missionary parents, but because he was pious, and non-athletic, he felt insecure with peers. He says, "I was probably too concerned about my own status to be able to be very loving toward my peers." Not until early adulthood and his army experience did his peer relationships begin to be more comfortable. As he grew in self acceptance and self-esteem, he learned to judge himself less severely. Born into a pietistic family, he experienced a type of perfectionism and guilt.

In his childhood, Cobb had a personal and intimate relationship with God. "As I walked to school, I might be talking to God"; there was a "feeling of companionship and accessibility," an idea that God understood and was not angry with shortcomings. "It was a very warm and positive part of growing up." This relationship to God was central to his emotional, intellectual and feeling existence.

At a later age during his college years, he experienced a belief crisis and had to reconstruct his way of thinking about God. He had not learned as a child that God is omnipotent, in charge of everything, and so it was natural for him to be drawn toward the Whiteheadian understanding of a God in process. He says in his book

⁸ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 171.

Process Theology that process theology "provides a way of recovering the conviction that God acts creatively in the world and of understanding this creative activity as the expression of Divine Love for the world."⁹ In childhood Cobb's image of God was of a very large and knowing person; he now experiences God as "supremely worshipful and trustworthy, one's source of hope, the basis of transformation." Although his beliefs have changed over time, his "feelings [toward God] have changed less."

As Cobb clarified and harmonized his intellectual, psychological and spiritual understanding, he began to extend the boundaries of his love and care. He says that until 1969, his concern had been primarily with God and with human beings. After 1969, he connected the environment with theological issues. Now he views the intricate relationship of the totality of nature, God and human existence.

Martin Marty says he has experienced growth in the capacity to love over his lifetime. His understanding of the meaning of love has also changed. In the first half of his life, love was taken for granted. In his experience, it was natural for the child to receive love, and love was arranged just for the child; he was the center of the universe. In the second half of his life he began to see that love is at least as big a miracle as life itself, and that God and the people who love are doing something exceptional. As he grew in understanding, he realized that he was not the center of the universe, that love would not fix everything and that not everyone was

⁹ John Cobb Jr. and David Ray Griffin, Introductory Exposition on Process Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 51.

trustworthy, not even himself. So he examined the myths of childhood: the Noah and Santa Claus stories, and at this point had to select one of three options: (1) to stop in all believing; (2) to believe in spite of the questions; or (3) to reappropriate and reconstitute the myths through acts of affirmation. He chose the latter, believing that actions reflect an attitude toward love: either taking love for granted or attending to love as a way of life.

Marty feels that in maturity he has gained a certain realism. Love does not always fix the broken child; the agents of love are sometimes hateful, blighted, always limited and preoccupied with their own lives. The child can account for the evil as the devil or bad luck, but the critical question for Marty is what to do about evil. Mother Teresa and Albert Schweitzer saw the evils of poverty, hundreds dying each day, and yet were undefeated. Loving people find a way to affirm their love, even in the presence of evil. They transcend their limitations in the face of evil; as Marty puts it, "I grow in my own resolve to oppose apathy and despair."

Marty's experience is that love comes spontaneously as a gift of Grace or that love grows and is strengthened through practice. For the Christian, increasing the capacity to love is a calling or a vocation. The Christian is called to make "love the trajectory of life, the whole shape of life, the point and direction of it, that by which you measure evening against morning, decade against decade and the end of life against the beginning of life." Marty does not feel, however, that he can love everyone. Some unlovable persons reject love and he cannot with all of his energy break through. "Original sin doesn't want forgiveness and does not want to love."

In those instances he directs his energy elsewhere. Sometimes even close relationships require a redirection of energy when forgiveness and love do not prevail. He has known marriages that ended when the relationship failed and love was broken. In these cases, each must look for love in new relationships. As for the partner: "For each one, part of the heart remains wounded, one part of the conscience is stung, but hopefully each is free to love again."

Growth for Marty has included learning to make himself available in the moment. Even the busiest schedule needs the flexibility of "creative schedule interruptions." Using one's energy wisely is an art, and learning the art of being selectively available is important. There is in this a sense of serendipity for him, a sense of openness to the moment. He may learn, in allowing one more question after saying "no more questions," an important new lesson about love.

As Marty has grown in his capacity to love, he is aware that he is able to see, to penetrate more deeply into the inner essence. "Love enables us to see beyond the surface reality. Love can make a plain woman, such as Eleanor Roosevelt, beautiful. The artist teaches us about seeing with the eyes to see." Marty describes the work of Charles Birchfield, who painted workers' dirty homes and ash-can realism in his early days, then in the second half of his life glowing scenes from nature. Likewise, Georges Rouault painted prostitutes and corrupt judges in his early career, and then turned to painting the transfigured Christ, who looks like stained glass. When somebody asked Rouault why he changed, he said he had spent his whole life painting sunsets and now had the right to paint the dawn.

Elia Wise answers that she experienced a change in her demonstration and manifestation of love as she matured. She not only grew in her ability to recognize love as it was given to her, but in her ability to allow herself to be a conduit for love. In her intuitive knowledge of the essential nature of love, nothing has changed. From earliest childhood she has sensed a permeating universal love, but has had to learn how to receive and express that love, a task that has become her life purpose. Maturation, for her, means increasing her capacity not just to experience love but to express love. "To take something so exquisite as universal love and refine the vehicle--myself--to express such subtle nuance, took years and years of cultivating the mediums of my expression." This has required developing her gifts and talents through writing, verbal communication, dance or music in order to express universal love: this intangible, invisible, formless energy conveyed through the world of form. For her this is possible only when the form is empty of resistance and the universal love can move through her. In singing a note, if the form is free of distracting "noise," the universal energy can pour through and the note becomes pure. To clear away the blocks to this universal flow has been her deepest desire. These blocks cannot be thrown away, but must be integrated and transformed so that they can contribute to the whole. "Everything stays, but everything gets raised to a level of essential truth so that it might inhabit the same space."

Growing in her capacity to express love has meant not only growing in the expressive media but also growing in honesty. A fraction of dishonesty will change the whole pattern of love expression. The technique that she has used is to listen

more and more to the inner voice of her higher self or her essential spirit. Whenever a choice or decision arises, she asks, "What is true, what is right action?" Whatever she knows in that moment becomes her decision. In doing this, through her early years, her worldly self and spiritual self grew closer until at age twenty-six she had an extraordinary experience of their convergence. "My essential being and my worldly self became interchangeable. What was the choice of my spiritual self was spontaneously the choice of my worldly self." In this way, she has gained new dimensions of experience: her sense of the practical world has become other worldly and her spiritual capacities have been informed by the worldly. Wise describes her essential spirit as that part of her which pre-exists physical form.

It is the ongoing integrity of my identity from the first moment of existence. It informs me with the nature of essential reality and informs the universe of the revelations of subjective reality. My spirit is a go-between, a liaison of enlightenment.

Her essential spirit has access not only to all her personal experience but also to all the universal experience of the collective unconscious. God, for her, is the first Source, the stimulus, and everything created is a divestiture of some expression of this Source. God is the original consciousness, the original Source, Force, Spirit, Energy from which all things manifest. God gives expression to all kingdoms, plant, animal and so forth, to all people like an "ego-divestiture." God births all manifested creations in their infinitely unique forms. She says that if she were to dramatize God, it would be to say,

I'm music, I'm sound, I'm dance, I'm color, I'm vibration, I'm this value and I'm that. I'm temperance, I'm courage, I'm trust, I am all. And in order to know every facet, every value of my being, simultaneously

and wholly, without any one aspect given more opportunity for expression than any other, I divest myself of all these parts and manifest them in you, in tree, in flower, in seed. God is ever growing as we in our expression and manifestations combine and recombine in new combinations of potential.

Wise understands maturation in loving as different from growth in love. For her, love does not grow. As one becomes more expressive of the spirit of self, the existing truth of love becomes self-evident. Love is eternally whole. What changes is one's ability to recognize love, to know it as oneself. As one grows, awareness expands and love becomes self-evident.

She describes her fullest realizations of love as coming in the same way she would experience in the moment a precious lover, meeting the fullness of the moment with a full willingness for an intimate encounter. It does not matter what is in a moment, whether it is a sacred time or a time as mundane as going to the bank. What does matter is an awareness of a spirited Self interacting with what is. In this awareness is a realization of the value of the moment, knowing it will not last, knowing that at any moment the bell may ring. In moving through this moment of pure harmony, whatever is known will be recognized as God, as love, as Self. In a moment of attunement the face of love is revealed.

Wise has changed in her understanding of judgment, no longer measuring by the same yardstick. If a person commits a heinous act, she still asks what happened when that person was a child of two, four or seven. When someone treats her disrespectfully, she perceives the history that cultivated her oppressor into the person of this moment. She now regards such persons--people who can be defined as

adversaries--as opportunities for her to learn other dimensions of selfhood. A rose, to Wise, is its history from rose seed, to sprout, to bud.

Wise says that an essential part of growth in loving has been the recognition of her own self-worth. As a child she was treated like "an old shoe," and she has had to reclaim herself in order to accept herself as a "glass slipper." She says that the process took a decade from age fifteen to age twenty-five. During this decade, she learned that her personality and her personhood (sense of humor, temper and so on) are as divine as her essential spirit and that she can love these elements too. In personal relationships she feels loved and respected for her insightful intelligence and creativity, but believes she has rarely been known or loved for her true dimensional self.

For Wise the understanding of intimacy has changed. In her early twenties she thought that intimacy meant energetic or physical intensity. But as she and her companions have matured, intimacy has come to mean those fine moments of entering love together. Through personal relationships she has learned to express more universal love, and she does not consider some people her enemies. People who are problems are just doing what they have to do next, given their variables. They offer opportunities to learn new lessons of understanding, tolerance and embrace. Sometimes the lessons have been painful--when she has hurt others, tramped on the flowers, or broken something precious to another person--but these experiences have provided spiritual lessons that must be learned through experience.

Wise discusses her experience of nature, saying, "In nature love is a constant experience for me. It's the constant presence, communication, dialogue, embrace I have of love." Nature is pure love. Forests burn down in a violent action, and then new forests spring up. "I've had the experience of actually becoming tree, earth, water, in a way that I know we are all the same stuff in different expressions of manifestation."

In loving others, Wise has learned that "trying to love" does not work. At one point she believed learning to love was a spiritual path, but she soon realized she was simply imitating saints. Loving in this way reiterates the lie. It is behavior without presence. In time she gave up the hypocrisy of trying to love. She has decided that whatever her love is, that has to be it, no more wishing that it were greater. She has come to know that whatever is true for her in the moment, is her love. "There is nothing more loving that I can do than demonstrate the truth of my being."

When asked whether or not love, as she has known it over her life journey, has changed, Eleanor De Tiger asks which Eleanor we are talking about. She is, she admits, two Eleanors. There is an Eleanor who has an identity and is known to others by that identity; that identity includes her personality and the many roles she plays. She perceives that this Eleanor changes in time. The other Eleanor, an inner part of being, has never changed from her earliest memory until now and functions as an inner essence coded into her from the beginning. Within this essence is a longing to reach out to others, and she is disappointed when this call is misunderstood. She feels that she has not fully integrated the two Eleanors: the

inner soul and the personality identity whom others know as Eleanor. "The problem I have with Eleanor, as you see her, is that individuals tend to personalize what my life expression is. Who I am is not this personality." She says that the purpose of living and the source of happiness for her is to express the inner soul in the outer personality. She knows the deepest happiness when there is some expression of that soul quality in her life, and she is communicating on the heart level. In many cases this communication is neither received nor understood by the other person. "It's like a rushing stream that others try to grasp, but it swirls around a rock and is gone. What is being said on the heart level is completely missed." That Eleanor which is personality is passionate about her family and her work. That Eleanor which is soul is detached, serene, aware of the eternal dimension of reality. She has a deep desire for the two Eleanors to be concurrent, that is for the acting, passionate Eleanor to be grounded in the eternal dimension. When the active Eleanor is grounded or connected to the eternal Source, she feels at some level right with herself. For her this is total happiness.

De Tiger understands that her maturation in loving has developed through the role of mothering. As a child she mothered her mother, her friends, and anyone else she could find. In adulthood she has spent many years mothering five children. According to her, cultures use the image of mother's love as a human model of Divine Love. From mothering children she has gone into global mothering. Now her range of loving has extended far beyond the immediate circle of family and friends. All children are her children. She has concern for the health and well being of all

peoples of the earth itself. Love, whether it is human love or Divine Love, is life enhancing.

For De Tiger, to live her truth sometimes means breaking the bondage of the limitations set by religion and culture, setting forth on an untrodden pathway, blazing a new trail. "Divinity wants us to be original. That's what creativity is all about." When one breaks free, steps into unknown territory, is released from all attachments and beliefs, and is no longer supported by status symbols such as "honorable human being," one enters the mystery of all life. "No mystic can follow the path of another mystic. One is alone at the moment of entering the direct path back to God." De Tiger speaks of the human hunger and longing to realign with the Divine, our Source and our true love. The relationship with God has lasting power, much more that can be had through human relationships. Yet through our human relationships we find God. This is the dilemma. "This is not the age for the aesthetic. It is through facing life fully, living life daringly, taking risks to love that we finally know God."

Another measure of growing in the capacity for loving for De Tiger is the purification of motives. Her work carries no vested interest, offers no academic degrees, academy awards or financial remuneration. She trusts that time brings in the fruits. She believes that one's motivation is always being tested by Spirit. "We must enter into our search for truth with no intent on being successful."

De Tiger, in talking about her maturation of love, speaks of the growing realization that love cannot bind, it must set free. A loving mother cuts the umbilical cord when the child is able to stand alone. In other loving relationships a separation

is sometimes necessary when one partner is ready to move into new growth and the other is not. Loving relationships allow the opportunity for the growth of the other. For De Tiger, her maturation has brought an awareness of a detachment that enables her to give the other freedom, and to relate to the other without becoming enmeshed in an unhealthy situation.

De Tiger has matured in her love of herself. After many years of mothering others, she began to pull away and to set her own personally directed life process. She has refused to accept cultural paradigms which hold that a person should be or do certain things, or love in an expected way. However, she has had an awareness that she wants to grow and work in ways which will bring her closer to God. She does not choose to be solely self-oriented, but to participate in a larger work, to do her work in the spiritual realm, to assist others in their journey toward God. Her belief system maintains that "the gates of heaven do not close until the last person enters. No one is in until all are in." De Tiger says that some enter the spiritual realm isolating themselves in only those situations which are spiritual, connected, loving and beautiful. These persons are like "hot-house plants." To be loving when all goes well is very different from being loving when all does not go well. These are real tests to one's capacity to love. Toughness is a part of it, and "sometimes action will not be loving. It's hard to be on a ship when it's sinking in stormy waters." Those who are not isolated in ideal environments must be tough in order to face the challenges, disappointments and frustrations of trying to bring love into a chaotic and

broken world. "Chaos is the stuff from which creation comes. Total love is to honor the larger process."

Dorothy and Douglas Steere speak of growing, through their life, in their sense of the infinity of God's love. As a child, Dorothy felt God's presence in nature, felt the interconnectedness of all things, felt the preciousness of the gift of life. This became not only a joy but a burden, as she did not believe she could adequately return the gift. In adolescence and adulthood she suffered feelings of inferiority as a result of her sense of inadequacy. She was not all that she wanted to be. Gradually, in time, she has begun to feel that God's love is infinite, that God loves her not for what she does, but for herself. As this awareness of God's love has deepened, she has become "freer to love herself." This growing sense of God's love has led to self-love, and she feels love has grown for her. She has found that as she does love herself she grows in her ability to understand and love others.

As members of the Society of Friends, the Steeres have made silence a center of their worship life. Douglas Steere speaks of growth in love as being the "continuous process of increasing self surrender and inward abandonment to grace."¹⁰ Prayer for him is paying attention to the deepest thing he knows. In the quiet act of centering down and paying inner attention, "awareness expands; we are made awake: awake to our finitude, awake to the great gulf stream of love that will not let us go. Prayer intensifies us. It wakens the sleeper in us and restores a

¹⁰ Douglas Steere, Together in Solitude (New York: Crossroad, 1985) 5.

thankful heart."¹¹ The Steeres find that in the silence of the corporate Quaker meetings, the interior presence of Christ moves within them to center and renew their lives.¹²

In 1933, during an afternoon walk in the German countryside, Douglas Steere was overwhelmed with a love for his mother and an awareness of her years of caring. He later wrote her a love letter telling her how little he had thanked her. "At that point something broke in me and I began to see, at the bottom of it all, it is love that matters, love that opens the way." He has experienced what is for him a living truth, the infinity of God's love and grace. In prayer "during moments of awesome awareness, I am besieged and immersed in a love that is utterly without qualification."¹³ The awareness of this loving presence within has been a growing experience through the past sixty years of his life. He is clear that God is the initiator and that he simply enters the ongoing stream of love during prayer.

Sirah Vettese has experienced that her ability to love has definitely changed as she has moved through her life. As a child she knew the pain of physical, emotional parental abuse and the loneliness of isolation within a large dysfunctional family. As a child she did not love others in the way she loves others today, but she believes that the pain of childhood has set her on a path of self discovery. Because love was not available within the family situation, a traumatic experience at age

¹¹ Steere, Together in Solitude, 25.

¹² Douglas Steere, Gleanings (Nashville: Upper Room, 1986) 20.

¹³ Steere, Gleanings, 22.

fifteen required that she find strength within herself. By experiencing the first feelings of self appreciation and self love with this experience, she has grown in her capacity to love others. She strongly believes that love of others is not possible until one knows the meaning of self love. For her, pain is the force which has initially moved her toward love. It is the unloving persons in her life that have challenged her to seek love. In seeking love within herself, she has discovered a universe of love within. "In essence those challenges were meant to teach me that I hold within myself the power to love. I have a visual picture that within my soul is a universe that is infinite, that will be forever open."

As Vettese has grown, she has experienced new heights and dimensions of love. She has learned acceptance and the meaning of forgiveness. Where once others were seen as hostile and unkind, she now believes that there are no true enemies. What we perceive as hostility from another is just a mirror reflection of some unlikable part of ourselves. The so-called enemy requires us to look at hidden parts of ourself. "Those that give us the greatest difficulty are our greatest teachers." They are there to present an opportunity to move through anger, jealousy and fear. Through them we can reach new levels of love.

Vettese has experienced a growing empathy for the so-called unlovable. She knows that the source of their hostility, anger and fear, is unresolved pain of the past. Within each unlovable person is a lovable part that longs for forgiveness and understanding. The person's chaotic responses can teach valuable lessons.

Vettesse's experience of loving God has also undergone change. For her, God is unbounded pure love whose essence can be known in all of creation. In looking at love as a flower, one may see the bright yellow color and radiance. "This flower is a part of the wealth of love that has been created to nurture and guide us into being more." The more we trust and surrender to this love the more we grow in love.

Vettesse describes a recent spiritual experience.

One night when I went to bed I had an out-of-body experience. I felt like I was cradled in light; the more I gave myself over to it, felt its love (surrendered), the more love came to me. Then I became aware of swirling energy--it felt like angels all around me, loving me. I felt safer and safer until I drifted into a deep sleep. From this I learned that the key is 'to surrender to that love.' The most productive spiritual experiences are those of surrender to that which I am. I am love.

Kathy Galloway has experienced growth and change in her ability to love. As she has traveled her spiritual journey, she has felt an expanding receptivity, openness and vulnerability toward others, relaxing both inward and outward barriers and the inhibiting idolatries such as false worship of wealth and success. She has learned that giving love is not enough, that as human beings we need to receive love as well. Love that is infused with Divine Love does not demand or possess the other. In learning to love, she appreciates the unique qualities of another and is surprised and delighted by them. She is increasingly less controlling of either herself or the situation, instead opening to whatever is presented in the moment. In being more compassionate and merciful toward herself, she is able to stand by others in their pain or in their passion. Compassion for others includes a political as well as a personal dimension.

Galloway believes that in loving, one acts from decision, not emotion. Love is an act of discipline. Loving, she thinks, gets better with practice: "The more I love, the more I can love. Love is like a fire, the more you stoke it, the more it builds." Love requires a decision not to back out when things get hard, and not to limit love to those who love us. Love requires honesty and yet this honesty must be tempered with kindness. Honesty without kindness can be brutal, but kindness without honesty can be facetious. Galloway has also learned the importance of communicating her love. People need to know they are loved. In Western culture one is trained, "to get a return." In love this expectation and demand for a return does not work. Too often love is not given until its return is assured. For her, love must be freely given without expectation of return. As the other person receives love without demands, trust grows in the relationship. This trust leads to a sense of freedom to be one's authentic self, and trust becomes a catalyst for the growth and expansion of each person.

Of her relationship to others Galloway says, "You can't appreciate and love people without wanting them to be treated with justice." As she has grown in her love, she has felt not only a growing tenderness for others, but a passion and an anger for the distortions and the evils of life such as building weapons instead of eliminating poverty and disease. For her, love has a strong component of justice.

David Hassel acknowledges that the quality and depth of his love has changed as he has matured. He believes he first learned about love from his mother and father who not only loved each other, they loved him. They wanted what was best

for each other and for him. Through their caring they taught him responsibility and fostered the sense of his value as a person. Others through his life have loved him and he has learned about love from each of them. Through a deep friendship with a Catholic nun, he has learned about non-sexual love between a man and woman, learning in the process to "deal in depth and in dignity with all women." This nun helped him to recognize clearly his limitations and to grow in self-understanding. Jesuit friends have also contributed to the growth of his love. Whatever love I have "has been poured into me by the people who have loved me, the people who have sacrificed for me and who have poured their own life blood in me along the way."

Learning to "know your weaknesses, your propensities; to know that you could, or have, hurt others is a critical part of the process." Love has gradually freed him from careerism and desire for power or achievement. People have become more important than anything else, and for Hassel, the "sweetness of life comes from the affirmation of other people." In loving other persons he has not lost a sense of value for himself. He cares for himself, his health and appearance, out of self-respect. He believes loneliness can be the result of depreciating others. The more he is able to affirm and to love others, the more he experiences love coming to him. This builds confidence and the freedom to risk and take bold chances.

Hassel believes that encompassing all love is God's love, which calls us to the highest love within ourselves. This love says, "Don't give up. Stay with the people you love the way I stay with the people I love." This love is steadfast and loyal. This gives him hope, for even as he recognizes his fragility and sinfulness, he knows that

God has not forsaken him, that God is gracious and loving. It is through the steadfast love of God, parents and friends that he has gradually worked through and amid the limitations of self-centeredness. Through them he has been awakened to the meaning of self-sacrifice.

Growing in love for Hassel has also meant growing in the understanding of surrender. For him love involves a trust. In surrender, one trusts the other with one's frailties, weaknesses and vulnerability. In surrender one gives up control. In surrender to God, one realizes that cuteness, tricks and manipulation simply do not work. In praying the prayer of surrender, "God, this is your world and I am ready to take what you think best, not what I think best," one finally finds peace and freedom. This surrender implies an openness and willingness to change opinions, beliefs and ways of doing things.

Growing in love, for Hassel, has meant learning to express love. He has learned that most people are not proud, but are, in fact, in great need of affirmation. Loving others means telling them what is in your heart, seeing them as persons, expressing to them their value. As he has done this, his confidence has grown in the power of love. He knows that, for him, loving others is what life is about. It is in loving the persons around him, the gracious and friendly along with the irritating and unfriendly, that he finds meaning.

As he has grown in the capacity to love, Hassel feels he has become more sensitive to others, to their needs. He has learned to accept the affection of others and consequently to be more affectionate toward them. He has found his teaching

of philosophy has changed. At one point in his teaching, he was hyper-intellectual. Now he is more experientially oriented. His writing has changed from highly abstract to concrete, becoming more realistic and more sensitive. He gradually has grown in hopefulness, relinquishing tendencies to worry about his students, his religious order or the university. His hope lies in accepting that it is God's world and that "God knows where all this is going." This hope is not the result of his disciplines, but has come as a pure gift of Grace. For Hassel hope is an important aspect of love.

Love, according to Hassel, can endure beyond miles or years, space or time. In reunion with eighth-grade friends, he felt the warmth, joy and acceptance of those early years, as though, "We had been in steady conversation during those years." Among three particularly good friends, there were no implicit questions like, "Do you still think highly of me?" There were no fences, just openness and affection. It is this openness to affection that has grown for Hassel. He feels much greater freedom than at earlier ages to receive and to respond to the affection of others. He says he had believed that age forty-five would be a life peak and everything would be downhill after that, but the opposite has been true for him: the years of his sixties have been rich and full.

Not only in his teaching, but also in his personal experience, he has learned that self-respect and self-love are essential if one is to respect and love others. As one integrates past painful experiences, both given and received, one grows in accepting that unique mystery which is the Self. By asking for forgiveness of his bitternesses, his mistakes and his failures to respond to others, Hassel feels released

from their bondage. As self-love grows, love of others grows. Before there can be reconciliation and resurrection, there must be honest self-appraisal.

Arlene Nesbitt feels that her capacity to love has changed through her life process. Her love now has a different quality. When she is in touch with her inner love, then love from within flows out to the other person, no matter who that might be. Thus, it is possible to experience and express a love that does not depend on the other's response. This love transcends morality, social taboos and inhibitions. When one is open to this inflow of inner love, miracles can happen. The other person receives the love on some level and is warmed by it. This love can be as simple as a touch or a smile with a stranger, but the effects are very obvious and real.

As a part of the expansion process in spiritual love, Nesbitt has become increasingly willing to trust her intuition. She lives by spiritual laws and not by strict psychological laws. On the spiritual level forgiveness can be complete and immediate. This clearing would take a great effort on the psychological level.

As she has grown spiritually, she has learned to trust the Holy Spirit for help in life-diminishing emotions. She believes it is important to give herself permission to realize any emotion in the moment, particularly anger and fear. She has learned to let go the emotions of her shadow side to the Holy Spirit. She has done much work in releasing the domination of her ego, which has opened her to a deeper self-appreciation. As her ego rules the psyche less autocratically, she has grown less self-conscious and is more aligned with her higher or spiritual self, adding to the integration of mind, body, spirit and ego. "What I do is no longer me, but flows from

a God-source, and yet, paradoxically, what I do is more particularly me than ever before."

Evolution is a part of life. We are evolving and God is becoming. Nesbitt sees love as the way of God and human persons becoming. The purpose of this evolution is to create a heaven on earth. As she follows what she believes to be God's will, she feels supported and led by the most unbelievable teacher, the Holy Spirit. When she asks for direction in meditative moments, she gets in touch with her higher self and receives specific ideas about what she is to do. She says that she has never been led to do or to be what she does not want, that when her will is in alignment with God's will, she can trust it. The more she is able to trust this inner direction, the more she is able to love and to be used as God's instrument. For her, life is no longer a struggle, it is a matter of listening and trusting. She knows a deep peace when her will is in alignment with God's, and a deep suffering when she is out of alignment.

As Nesbitt has grown in love, her understanding of God has changed. Christ is the potential that each person has to become the divine Christ. Christ is a demonstration of how to love, and the Second Coming means the Christ is to be manifest in more and more of humanity. She says, "I don't use prayer to Christ as my way of reaching God, but I have taken Christ as the way to live my life."

Nesbitt has seen a change in her relationship with others. She no longer feels responsible to or for other people. "As long as I hear my role, my inner direction, I am freed to love unconditionally." Her sense of needing people has diminished.

She has found that love is everywhere if she just opens to it. When she expresses a need to herself, she is amazed at how love comes to her from the most unexpected sources. This eases the burden on those persons who are close to her and takes away her need to possess them. Her whole attitude about possessive love, either parent-child or male-female, has changed. She is learning to experience love in the moment and to take it in whatever form it comes. She experiences joy in just looking at her granddaughter. In such moments she knows a deep peace, "a kind of expanding into fullness, a paying attention with my whole being." In those moments she feels complete and connected to, and a part of, the whole.

After a near-death experience in her late forties, she has realized love is the center of life. She went to Iona in Scotland to recover, and there she felt at home with a deep sense of God's presence. Her past became irrelevant. She is learning that it is not what you do, but how you do it. "If you are with God, you can do many things."

Love and Suffering

When investigating love, the question of suffering is central. For Marty, suffering has deepened his capacity to love, but his interest is not exclusively on the philosophy of human-induced suffering. The causes of such suffering, he says, can be detected and solutions engineered, but a mother whose child has brain cancer

poses another question. How does she deal with the pain? She probably copes with the pain through love.

She wakes up in the morning and affirms the day. That's an act of love, of praise to a God that seems hidden. It's an act of love for the sun that comes up, for the flower in the hospital window. Love in the face of suffering is the only instrument I know against suffering.

Marty addresses the pain and suffering when a loved one dies, when God is silent, when the soul is dull. In his book, A Cry of Absence, he speaks of two types of spiritual persons. For the summery type, the walk with God means walking always in the sunlight; "no chill is allowed around the heart." These summer-style believers seem to screen out "the parched tongues of children or the flooding rivers of catastrophe." On the other side are the wintry types who in their depths know the pain of God's absence, the reality of suffering and death. Marty says that the latter have an honesty which the first may not.

In the interview, Marty discusses what he calls the flow of love, and says that the deepest lovers are those who have suffered along the way and in the process have tapped into this deep flow of love. When faced with challenges beyond their resources, some discover deeper resources in the flow of love. For Marty true compassion may not be possible without suffering. He says, "The deepest lovers are those who have suffered along the way. . . . We never associate real love with a glib, easy-come, easy-go person."

Brother John believes that to love is to become vulnerable, which means opening to suffering. He says, "If you really love, you are going to suffer. Not because suffering is a good thing in itself, but because you're open, without protective

walls around yourself. The sign of Jesus' love was his dying on the cross." Within His suffering was His love. Being open also means entering the suffering of others, and carrying the pain with them. According to Brother John, love cannot offer easy answers to the one in deep suffering, love can only listen and enter the suffering.

The maturation process has changed Wise's concept of suffering. In younger years she suffered when she was hurt, uncomfortable, or things weren't going her way. Now "the distance that I have from myself is the measure of my suffering today." Separation from personal integrity is thus the basis for suffering. Before, suffering entailed the feeling that she was lost and abandoned, that she could not reach God. Enlightenment has brought the realization that "she was already there," that she had never been anywhere except in the wholeness that is God. With this realization, the nature of her suffering has changed. Now even when she is not operating from her center, she experiences hard times, discomfort, but not suffering. Before, when "I thought something was happening to me and my world was in dis-ease, I was suffering because I thought I was forgotten in some way, in the wrong place, doing the wrong thing. That fear of not being where I belonged or having a rightful place--that was suffering." Now, no matter what the experience is, she knows that she belongs, has a place. She experiences this as trust that she is integral with all things, trust that she cannot be lost. Suffering, then, is a state that pre-exists trust in the integrity of life. There is another suffering in her opinion that is primal and different, that suffering arising from a violation of life, when the life force is being drained. Therefore, one can feel the physical pain of an accident and yet not feel abandoned,

lost or separated from God. Many people suffer physical abuse and deprivation and continue to trust in their god. Physical suffering can exist without the deep existential suffering of feeling alienated from oneself, and from God.

De Tiger also speaks of the suffering resulting from deep longing to re-align with the Divine, to find the one source of lasting power, true love. However, De Tiger feels that the search for God is through living life daringly, facing life fully, which involves risk, vulnerability and pain. Only as she lives and experiences her life can she know her truth. She explains that, "Through rich involvement with the realities at all levels, we become educated, and we find truth and this eventually opens the door to wisdom, and from that we begin to glimpse God." De Tiger also distinguishes between the hot house plant which does well in a regulated environment, but is too delicate to withstand the rigors and pain of real life. She suggests that in order to love in the upper reaches, one lives the pain as it comes; one does not run away in denial. The growth process has opened a new understanding of the meaning of pain in life, in which she does not feel pain as others do. She experiences pain, not as unhappiness, but as a wonderful dimension of the living process. Although she has what others might call unhappy circumstances in her life, she does not feel unhappiness. She does not accept someone else's opinion of what is painful and what is unhappy. "The culture decides what is good and bad, happy and unhappy and then projects this onto the individual." When De Tiger is feeling a deep harmony with her inner soul, she feels a happiness regardless of what

is going on in the material, outer world. She has learned in her life process to honor her pain and in doing this the pain opens her inner being to new dimensions of life.

Dorothy Steere has experienced in her life, through her close association with others, the fact of great suffering in the world. She is aware of envious greed and hate, but also of sharing and human kindness. In the Steeres' travels, she has glimpsed joy and pain everywhere. "In war-torn Europe people stood up under terrible suffering and yet one felt so much courage and so much capacity to live through the frustration. It makes me feel that God is working with us and God's love is constant." Through her life, her faith has grown that love is the answer for our suffering world.

When asked about the relationship of love and pain, Galloway says, "Joy is the fruit of love, but pain and sorrow are also the fruit of love. These are two sides of the same coin." Joy is our delight in life; sorrow is our crying. This is the coin of living life with love. God is revealed in pain as well as in joy. Pain is a part of one's story. Pain like the pain of childbirth can open one to new possibilities. Pain is experienced as the seed bursts and new life begins. Pain can be a humbling and learning experience when it is creatively used. In the case of a cousin who was raped and murdered, the agony of pain brought her cousin's mother into a work of helping others like herself. "The pain will always be there," but instead of the pain causing lifelong embitterment, the pain has opened her heart to others. Pain and sorrow are like a deep well driven inside; the deeper it is, the more it can open the heart. This

opening of the heart brings a greater capacity to know and feel joy, tenderness and compassion.

For Fairchild suffering is a deep life issue in which some people become embittered and others grow in a meaningful way. He cites companionship as a key factor for contributing to growth through suffering. "People can bear an awful lot of suffering if they have companionship, but for those who are isolated, suffering is a different thing." Fairchild believes that in addition to companionship, common sense is important to the integration of pain and suffering. In his childhood, a certain woman impressed him who had a hydrocephalic son with a head the size of a watermelon. In turning her pain into victory, she started the Crippled Children's Association of San Francisco and each year eighteen hundred people came to her small house to meet Frankie and to discuss their situation. For Fairchild, this woman was the epitome of courage and goodness. In his own life he knows the pain of a young daughter who has suffered through a craniotomy and breast cancer and is determined to be well and independent. He is experiencing the true value of love within the pain of suffering.

Morton Kelsey is another who knows the suffering of a loved one's life-threatening illness. For many months, he watched the gradual decline of his son into death. The pain of helplessness and empathy for his son almost overwhelmed him. He says that such suffering can lead to bitterness or can open one to deeper love.

In the course of his journey with his son through the valley of death, Kelsey came face to face with deep and painful realities of watching a loved one lose the

valiant battle to cancer. In this experience, he could not evade the agonizing question of evil in a world created by a God of Love. He accepts that evil is real, that demonic destructive agencies exist, that in heaven power and knowledge challenge the God of Love and that powers of evil are within each person. He agrees with Jung that "none of us can deal with evil out there until we deal with the personal and collective (spiritual) evil within each of us."¹⁴ For Kelsey, evil becomes more destructive, merciless and cruel as it is distanced from the God of Love. Human history attests to the human desire to act independently of the wisdom of the God of Love. Yet, it is within this history that God offers humankind a new Spirit of power and love through the person of Jesus Christ. Kelsey believes that God allows will to exist because "love is willing to take risks"¹⁵ and through love one is able to confront the powers of fear, pain and death. "True and final healing occurs only on the other side of despair, suffering and death. True healing requires residence in the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of love."¹⁶

May in his book Will and Spirit, identifies attachment as a primary source of personal suffering. Attachment is a compulsive form of desire. Desires which are necessary and can be in accord with universal laws become attachments when they possess a desperation, a quality of graspishness, frenzy or drivenness. The greater the attachment, the greater the potential for suffering. Frustration of attachments can

¹⁴ Morton Kelsey, Reaching, The Journey to Fulfillment (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), 149.

¹⁵ Kelsey, Reaching, 155.

¹⁶ Kelsey, Reaching, 173.

cause rage or destruction. In human beings the self-image is often an attachment of great importance. May believes that "sin occurs when self-image and personal willfulness become so important that one forgets, represses, or denies one's true nature, one's absolute connectedness and grounding in the divine power that creates and sustains the cosmos."¹⁷ In sin, one sets oneself apart as a self-determining entity.

Although people suffer as the result of strong attachments, May recognizes that suffering also comes from destructive forces that are beyond self-importance and attachment. These forces lead away from the realization of union. The demonic exists depending on one's school of thought, as "a capacity within the mind, in human society, in the cosmos as a whole, or as a separate and autonomous agency of evil."¹⁸ In Christianity, Lucifer is the fallen light who attempts to lead people away from God through willful self-determination. For May self surrender, a movement from willfulness to willingness, allows the God beyond and the Godness within to rule our lives. "When our hearts and minds [are] given in surrender, with the special courage that is born of true humility, with acceptance of our weaknesses and with compassion for ourselves and each other, there is true hope."¹⁹

In concluding this chapter on the love and growth among the interviewees, one important note is that each interviewee has experienced growth in the areas of self-

¹⁷ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 233.

¹⁸ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 247.

¹⁹ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 310.

love. The ability to love the self and to forgive the self for shortcomings and transgressions is an important ingredient in growing in the ability to love. Another commonality among the interviewees includes the recognition of a personal integrity in which the self examines the self with honest objective evaluation, seeking better to understand psychic toxins; this is paramount to growing in the ability to love. These common themes and others are discussed in more depth in Chapter 7, with a resulting hypothesis described in Chapter 9 and conclusions in Chapter 10.

CHAPTER 7

Spiritual Disciplines and Divine Love

Chapter 6 explores the interviewees' personal evaluations of their experiences in maturing in their ability to love. Now to ask what are the factors that contributed to the growth process. In particular, the views of the interviewees will be explored regarding disciplines that foster loving and the relationship between human love and Divine Love. The purpose is to learn if love can be enhanced through education, and if so, how.

Spiritual Disciplines

This section examines responses of interviewees to the question, "What disciplines have been most significant in influencing your ability to love?" The hope is to learn something of those disciplines that enhance persons' ability to love.

Morton Kelsey responds to the question on disciplines by saying that a most important discipline for him has been keeping a journal. For him growth requires that he reflect daily on what he has and has not been, what he has and has not done. He has learned that if he does not record his joys, his transforming spiritual experiences, his vision of wholeness, they are forgotten and are seldom integrated.

Conversely, unprocessed pain, sorrow and despair can also diminish his life. Dreams through which the Spirit speaks in symbolic language reveal the failure to love and open him up to new meaning and direction. But to understand their message, he must write them down.

Thus the journal becomes a trusted friend to whom Kelsey can express his anger and frustration, a place to record his dreams. The journal reflects back his prejudice and confused thinking; it gives him distance on himself, and a chance to view himself more objectively with greater clarity and detachment. He points out that he cannot change what he does not know about himself. In this process of self-analysis, he often feels a "reminder from the Divine Source Center to pick himself up, to go back and to love." Through his discipline, he has been learning to process his anger, to understand its source and purpose before giving it expression. He feels that it is unloving to express unprocessed anger, and therefore important to bridle animosity until it can be understood.

Kelsey refers the interviewer to his recent book Reaching, in which he discusses the discipline of growing in consciousness. He quotes Jung as saying that the essence of sin is unconsciousness and unwillingness to become conscious.¹ Because human beings are gifted with the ability to be self-aware, to think, to reflect, the refusal to do so leaves them subject to whim, to momentary feeling, without priorities, goals and direction for their life journey. Kelsey reviews regularly his values and his goals in order to measure his actions and values.

¹ Morton Kelsey, Reaching (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 123.

Prayer is a discipline that Kelsey feels is basic to his human growth in loving. In prayer he is able to open to the Divine Spirit, to keep in touch with the God of love who knows the depths of human pain and suffering, who offers strength and wisdom. He describes two spiritual practices which he uses in prayer. One finds salvation in images and the other finds fulfillment in the imageless presence of God. Kelsey spends twenty to forty minutes each day in sitting quietly or in dialogue with the inner voice of Spirit. During the day, he finds himself turning to this Presence, seeking to find himself in even the most simple experiences. He practices the presence of God as taught by Brother Lawrence, Thomas Kelly and Frank Laubach.

In addition to his active prayer time, Kelsey finds great meaning in the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, he can confess his sins, his self-centeredness, his failures to love, and he can receive forgiveness and over-flowing love. From the love thus received, he feels inspired to go out and to love others. However, due to the limitation of time, he must limit his giving and set his priorities.

Kelsey believes that each person must learn to love himself/herself in order to love others. For Kelsey this involves caring for his human needs by exercising, eating well, playing, resting, practicing openness to Divine Love. His family also is a top priority, having first call on his time and energy. He says, "If I do not love my family, the rest of my love may be only a facade."² In addition to loving his family and himself, Kelsey grows by nurturing friendships and by sharing his experiences

² Kelsey, Reaching, 127.

through writing. He feels writing is his vocation and his call, and through his writing he finds fulfillment and renewal.

In discussing ways in which he has experienced growing in love, Roy Fairchild holds that growing in love is not possible apart from community. It is in "the fellowship of conversation and consolation that the rub and wear of life upon life reveals horns as well as halos." He has learned that every relationship has dark as well as positive sides, that unless he gets a picture of the other person as he/she really is, he is only loving an image. He has learned that love may entail suffering, that it may entail self-giving, that these things are not natural to the human psyche. He takes to heart the Biblical verse, "The transforming by the renewal of the mind" (Rom. 12:2), believing that transformation is possible both for himself and others. Cognitive therapy has taught him of the continual internal conversations in the mind that can be destructive as well as affirming. For him learning to monitor these internal conversations has been very important, and he does not automatically accept as valid what is presented. For instance, if the internal voice says, "That person didn't speak to me because he is angry with me," Fairchild does not accept that as the final truth. He uses prayer to ask for new information, perspectives and interpretations. In this way he expands psychological insight into spiritual understanding.

Fairchild has grown also through psychological counseling, which has deepened his self-understanding. He has learned that dreams can be valuable tools for illuminating feelings stored in the unconscious. One dream in particular has initiated a major life transformation. He has attempted to balance the inner and outer

dimensions of life. Through the inward disciplines of prayer and psychological analysis and through the outer disciplines of relationships, community and service, he believes his ability to love has grown.

For Eleanor De Tiger, the discipline for growing in love is a search to know and to live her inner truth. Her goal is love based on authentic experiences. In those moments of authenticity and truth, she feels herself to be aligned with the God force. Love that flows from this inner truth has the power of integrity. This love ripples out and touches others. Because the emanations of love flowing from Jesus have been so authentic and deeply rooted in truth, they still "resonate, still ripple out, still touch everyone, whether they profess to follow Him or not." The way of inner truth is a solitary journey, for it requires listening to the inner self and distancing oneself from accepted traditional views. De Tiger explains that "if we block our real truth and experience because of some false master hovering over us, we negate the potential of our divine right to express our true self under the light of God who is our only authority." Each person's experience is unique and each must learn to honor his/her inner knowledge and not attempt to emulate another's reality. For De Tiger, listening to her inner voice, and finding the courage to follow it, even in difficulty, is the spiritual discipline for loving. For her, living her truth has meant turning from her designated role as home-maker toward a full-time vocation as a spiritual coordinator for others. Her life is devoted to bringing world spiritual devotees together for dialogue and mutual sharing. She believes that as she is more harmonic

with her inner Spirit, she moves closer to God and becomes an active part of some divine plan.

De Tiger discusses the powerful role of mother in society and her own need to transcend the limitations imposed on her by this role. In her adopted country of Holland, women are assigned the role of mother and wife and there is still limited acceptance for the woman who wants to expand beyond these roles. To follow her inner truth has required a personal courage in the face of social disapproval.

Work has become another discipline. As De Tiger has felt the gathering storm clouds on the political horizon, she also feels a strong inner impetus to work tirelessly for bringing forth a spiritual dimension to material life. She has not only a need to develop herself spiritually, but also to assert and nurture others in their spiritual growth.

Spiritual disciplines, which are important to De Tiger, expand her consciousness. As her consciousness expands, her awareness of the gift of life both in herself and in the earth deepens. She is aware of the need to "incarnate," to embody and to give expression to her spiritual self. She grows in awareness of the interrelatedness of the whole creation and in her desire to honor this "great creation of the divine." She strongly believes that she is to give back more to the created order than she takes. She is allowed air and food, but she is not allowed to deplete or abuse the creation. Living in deprivation is not the answer, for the "creation is glorious," but she aims to honor the creation in joy.

Another discipline that expands De Tiger's consciousness and opens her to love is taking spiritual retreats on the Isle of Iona. Iona, a small island in Scotland, is for her a unique and heavenly place. Legend tells of the earth, originally gaseous in form, and Iona as the first place where it was condensed. Here on the oldest rock in the world, where the layers between heaven and earth are very thin, De Tiger feels the spiritual renewal that comes from being in harmony with creation. At Iona she comes to a new sense of harmony and openness to God.

Marty, in speaking of disciplines to nurture the ability to love, says that love comes by two means: as the gift of Grace and by increasing one's own capacity to love, which requires three things. First, "Love grows by attentiveness; inattention is the greatest killer of love." Indifference is the opposite of love. Mother Teresa is attentive in her care of others and, as a consequence of this attentiveness, her love grows. Attentiveness means being present and truly seeing the other person. We witness this ability to see beyond the surface, to penetrate the depths, in the loving senior citizen couple, in the artist, in the overweight friends at the shopping mall. Where others might say, "That person isn't much," the lover sees someone else. A lifelong career of love helps one acquire the eyes that are particularly penetrating from which love is revealed. Attentiveness is the opposite of indifference. Attentiveness to oneself is necessary for self-love. Learning to know oneself, to see oneself with the eyes of love, is critical. When Grace removes the veil of self-protection, those perspectives that limit love are removed. "It's a great gift." There is an "aha," a new awareness of self.

The second discipline for growing in love is practice. It is somewhat like weight-lifting. The more weight lifted, the stronger one becomes. Like muscles, the ability to love can atrophy, but each victory strengthens love. Love expands as it is developed and grows stronger as it is habituated. Gradually love becomes the natural expression. Like Aristotle's way, in which the good person is someone who habitually does good things through good means, toward good ends, so the loving person habitually chooses to love, through loving means, toward loving ends. To love becomes the whole trajectory or vocation of life. Marty uses Gabriel Marcel's term "crispation" to describe the state of the individual who has neither been attentive nor practiced love. Such a person has allowed the heart to become brittle, deadened, like the autumn leaves. There are many people who are "crispated" on whom God might work a miracle, but he says, "I wouldn't want to be the person given the assignment to make it like spring again." Other people he describes as "evergreen people." These people may dance at 94 because they have been practicing throughout their life. They do not start dancing at age 93. As one expands and strengthens one's capacity to love, more love becomes possible. Expanding one's capacity is comparable to the high jumper who continues to raise the pole in order to jump higher. It is not that the jumper pushes toward some goal at which time he/she attains strong muscles, but in the process of practice as the muscles strengthen, the capacities expand. Likewise, one can expand the capacity to love through gesture, caress, acts of generosity and self-sacrifice. "Love grows by doing it."

The third discipline for nurturing one's ability to love is reflection. Marty believes that people who "reflect on love's meaning are better off than those who don't." Not all writers on the subject of love are loving individuals who live what they are writing, but many of them have left documentation and tracks that others can pick up. Reflection brings love to a more conscious level. It is possible to get the nutrients of the day by eating fast foods, but to grow in the art of eating, one will have disciplines: learning about vitamins, food content, body needs, finding the best recipe book. By reflecting on the relationship between food and the body, one will learn to make good nutritional choices.

Marty explains that practice is important but that there is a danger of "routinizing the charisma," and "bottling the effervescence." In this case, that which is naturally flowing becomes channelled. So he does not embrace prescriptive disciplines which follow certain patterns and forget that in the life of the Spirit there can be blinding flashes, instantaneous moments of illumination. Marty says, "I like to keep the play element."

In discussing spiritual practices, Marty points out that the search for love will be somewhat different from the practice of solitary spiritual disciplines. Loving requires another person and loving is based on attentiveness and practice. Solitary disciplines such as prayer, meditation, music, reading and contacting nature can prepare one to love more fully, but love is lived out and tested in relationship.

Father Thomas Keating has found that one grows in love through the faithful practice of meditative silence, which is less a technique than it is a relationship, a

learning to hang out with God. As his prayer and meditative life deepen, he "knows" a loving Presence that is beyond thoughts, feelings or concepts; knowledge expands and God's Presence is experienced in all of humanity. As he opens to the Divine Presence, the divine psychotherapy is initiated in which God reveals the dark side of his human personality, his mixed motivations and the influence of his false self. In silence he distances from his self-image, which can be limited, biased and inadequate. In the silence of the Prayer of Contemplation, God reveals not only failures and weaknesses, but also basic goodness. In silence he experiences the freedom to change as the perceptions of the false self are identified. By taking a vacation from the false self and opening to God's presence, he finds a greater peace; he is able to disengage from some of the cultural programming, and the drives and desires for these false values are diminished. Divine psychotherapy empties the unconscious and removes the obstacles to the flow of Grace. Contemplative prayer leads to the transformation of the whole personality. Keating believes that every person has potentiality for becoming divine, but this requires unmasking the false self and integrating the dark side of the personality.

Keating believes that through the center core of our being we make a connection with God, and as we progress on the spiritual path, we are increasingly able to live from this center. As he practices interior silence or the Prayer of Contemplation, he feels an underlying quiet even in activity. In his book, The Heart of the World, Keating discusses the genuine humility that comes as a result of

centering in the God center. This humility is not a self-depreciation, but a conviction "of being created out of nothing and redeemed."³

Keating teaches the Prayer of Contemplation, or Centering prayer, in which a sacred word is used to point the mind inward, toward one's divine center. Without controlling or manipulating, the mind begins to settle to deeper and more silent levels. At the deepest level of the mind, one experiences silence and communion. The more one comes to interior silence, the more one is transformed into God's image. The true Self is this core of goodness whose center of gravity is God. The fake self is the constellation that develops in opposition to the true self. It includes self-serving habits, emotional damage from childhood, defense mechanisms, false values, illusions, and so on.

A second valuable spiritual discipline for Keating is to respond to the afflictive behavior patterns that are revealed by the Divine Psychotherapist. This requires an honest willingness to accept these behaviors and a sincere desire to change. God, according to Keating, values sincerity of heart. "The growing awareness of our true self, along with the spiritual peace and joy which flows from this experience, balances the psychic pain of the disintegrating and dying of the false self."⁴ Keating points out that self-knowledge takes courage, but it is the only way to find one's true identity and true self. When life-inhibiting, neurotic tendencies or psychic toxins are revealed to the conscious mind, their power is diluted. Keating accepts into consciousness a

³ Thomas Keating, The Heart of the World (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 67-70.

⁴ Keating, The Heart of the World, 67.

toxic pattern and then releases it by saying, "I give up this desire for" Growth takes place by the process of centering and dismantling the false self.

A third spiritual discipline for Keating is the practice of unconditional acceptance of others. This means accepting persons as they are with all their idiosyncracies and peculiarities and not feeling a responsibility to change them. This acceptance and love of others is the discipline Jesus taught with "Love one another as I have loved you." This is not easy, and requires much practice. As part of the discipline, he does not correct another person when he himself is feeling a strong reactive emotion, but waits until he has regained his centeredness.

Keating also advocates the discipline of basic self-acceptance. He is aware of affirming himself when appropriate and of having a genuine compassion for his limitations and sins. He gives himself permission to make mistakes and then to learn from these mistakes. Accepting himself also means accepting his basic core of goodness.

Jitka Slavick is one interviewee who speaks of a teacher in relationship to disciplines for loving. Her teacher, a master from India, Maharaj Charan Singh I, has been her spiritual director for eight years. To learn meditation and expand her spiritual life, Slavick journeys from Switzerland to the master's Indian ashram once or twice a year. She was first touched by his absolute integrity and congruity in relating to every person with warmth and love. No one person is more valuable than another. He relates to each person on the level of soul, not mind. He is totally authentic, natural and spontaneous in his expression of generosity and truth. He lives

what he teaches. These qualities of "being" attracted Slavick to the man and to his teachings. Her devotion has been the source of her discipline. She has learned new dimensions of love from this loving teacher.

Meditation is also a useful discipline for Slavick. As she follows the inward path, she discovers her inner guide or teacher. This inner guide leads her toward greater freedom, truth, love and peace. She is aware of a growing inner tranquility and happiness in which she trusts that life is going as it should, and things will take their own course. There is as a result less need to control and manipulate life's happenings. For her, following and trusting her inner guide has been a discipline in itself. By trusting her inner guide, she is able to see herself more clearly, to see her impurities and her distance from God. As her sense of humility deepens, she feels closer to others, less judgmental, more open. There is a deep respect for the destiny of the other person. By following her inner guide, she becomes more in tune with herself and more willing to let other people live their own lives. She feels less egotistic desire to know everyone's business. Allowing others "to be" without manipulation or control and following her inner guide are the primary disciplines Slavick uses for that growth which results in more authentic love.

Ross Snyder refers the interviewer to his book On Becoming Human. The goal, according to Snyder, is to develop the sense of aliveness, "to nurture the self as a center of aliveness, origination and meaning."⁵ Aliveness is wealth of feeling, deep caring and sensitive awareness. It involves tuning into life, celebrating life,

⁵ Snyder, On Becoming Human, 20.

discovering the adventure of life. Alive, vibrant existence is in contrast to dull, lifeless, humdrum existence.

Life is not static. Life is a continual becoming, a drive of potentiality to become actual. Each person has responsibility to his/her becoming, and self-love is not selfishness but responsible action. To be unfaithful to one's gifts and talents or to stifle one's becoming results in sickness and inner darkness. For Snyder the fundamental drive to actualize potential cannot be violated with impunity. By nature one is not merely a center, but a "becoming center"⁶ and it is in becoming that one experiences aliveness. Becoming suggests a new level of consciousness, a development toward greater fullness of life. It requires accepting and recognizing one's feelings, which allow a person to know "what kind of engagement he [she] is having in the world."⁷

To attend to one's becoming is life-long. Becoming aware of one's values, and making decisions and choices accordingly, is how the self is created. Becoming requires diving into the depths of life. It is a real engagement with life and it involves risks. Becoming entails not only knowing one's feelings but also one's inner understanding of the self. Experience and reflection on experience lead to self-understanding and knowledge of the self as a spirited existence. When this alive, spirited center relates with the center of other persons, there is intimacy which comes from sharing one's truth with another. The vital core of any person's identity is

⁶ Snyder, On Becoming Human, 22.

⁷ Snyder, On Becoming Human, 29.

his/her sense of this inner truth. True intimacy is not possible without a sense of inner truth. Snyder has found life meaningful, rich, alive to the degree that he can share his own and others' integrity. A person isolated from others is not alive. Growing in aliveness means growing in ability to relate meaningfully to others.

Snyder expresses his meaning of life through living his values and through clear communication that becomes a communion when it is a "two-way circuit" of both giving to and receiving from another. Snyder believes that "honest communication is a touchstone of one's integrity," and gives expression to "significant meanings of life." He, therefore, emphasizes writing: "To put these meanings into beautiful embodiment in your living in memorable words and conversation, in music, poems and paintings that express the meaning that you see and feel, is really much of what life is about."⁸

David Hassel refers the interviewer to his books on prayer in answer to the question about disciplines that make love grow. Prayer is the central discipline for Hassel's life and the source of his physical, psychological and spiritual strength. For him, prayer reveals weaknesses and fragility as well as strengths. Paradoxically, confidence grows as he honestly faces his failures, his actions that hurt others. He says, "Through the experience of our own defects, we grow in our compassion for each other." Humility is getting down to earth, being true and honest about oneself. From this humility, one asks, "How is it that the other person loves me?" and one then appreciates the other's love as a gift.

⁸ Snyder, On Becoming Human, 122.

In his first teaching assignment with a group of "tough" students, Hassel learned that he had to find a strength beyond himself in order to cope with life situations. Prayer sustained and strengthened him through these trials, especially "the prayer of reminiscence wherein the Lord God is asked to raise up into his mind and heart memories of gifts relevant to a situation or trial." This is based on the belief that the past is not dead, but is actively alive, influencing the present. He first learned of this prayer from the Confessions of St. Augustine. Augustine found that in opening himself to the Lord God, past experiences could be utilized to produce a more mature perspective on the present happening.

This discipline which Hassel has used for fifteen to twenty years has healed many resentments and hurts and has given him a new vision and strength. This discipline requires an acceptance of the Holy Spirit and an openness and trust of Christ as the interpreter of Gospel episodes and the healer of wounding events. It involves a spiritual dimension that distinguishes it from psychoanalytic techniques, which involve only the self and another person. In this prayer, Hassel can understand significant life events with more maturity and see them as Christ would see them, with realism and affection. He is thus gradually appropriating the past self and becoming increasingly self-aware.

Hassel believes that each person is unique with individual spiritual journeys. Each person carries many pains and wounds from the past and, "If there is any way that a program can teach how to love, it must first search for those hurts." Thus St.

Augustine's prayer of reminiscence in his Confessions is a liberating discipline which increases one's capacity for love.

Hassel discusses other prayers that are important in his prayer life. These include the "prayer of listening and waiting" in which he asks simple questions of the Lord God and then awaits in silence God's answer. Many types of prayer are described in his books, Dark Intimacy and Radical Prayer. Hassel says, in the interview, that as he has grown older, he realizes that loving persons, particularly those we meet each day, is the most important human act. It begins with the initial desire for a more intimate relationship with God, and it culminates with the experience of intimacy and communion with God at the self's quiet center. As he has grown in his prayer life, he has become increasingly aware of the power of trustful submission and openness to inner direction by the Lord God.

Another valuable discipline for learning to love, according to Hassel, is learning to express love. The ability to express love through touching, through the spoken word, through warm affection, expands through doing. Children denied the warmth of expressive love grow into rigid, non-expressive adults, fearful of intimacy. He believes that intimacy is at once the most feared and yet most desired of relationships; it keeps the world from becoming a collection of alienated people estranged and isolated in private encapsulations. Hassel speaks of "creating a welcome for God, ourselves, other people and the world"⁹ through prayer and

⁹ David Hassel, Radical Prayer (Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1984), cover page.

through action. "Prayer, taken radically, is a deep attitude toward life, a basic way of living in the world with God and others."¹⁰

The discipline of learning to choose the good and, if possible, the better, is important for Hassel. From St. Augustine he learned that freedom is the ability to choose whatever one desires, good or bad. But liberty is choosing the good at whatever the cost. It takes discipline to choose the better, to choose to grow in the virtues of justice, temperance, prudence and courage without the compulsions of perfectionism or idealism.

Other spiritual disciplines that have deeply influenced Hassel are the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius. In a retreat every ten years, he can spend a month in contemplation. The first week is for the appreciation of God's creation and for the self-examination and questioning of how one's gifts are used. The second week is directed to the public life of Christ, the third week to the passion, the fourth to the resurrection. This total immersion into Christ breaks a self-centeredness. Through the experience of the resurrection, for example, one knows forgiveness and new life. Each year Hassel spends eight days in a condensed version of this retreat.

In order to discuss the disciplines for growing in love, Elia Wise first points out that in her life, discipline is relatively unimportant. She does not cultivate a practice in order to improve herself. For instance, to force herself to practice the piano when the love is not there is a dishonesty and will produce shallow results. Her belief is that if music were her passion, she would not have to force herself to practice. She

¹⁰ Hassel, Radical Prayer, 158.

would be so filled with desire to hear music from her own hands that she could sit at the piano for hours. She says, "Where I have a passion, I have a discipline that you can't cultivate." If she feels a passion for something and stays with it until she is satisfied, "the discipline is cultivated in the process by my love and devotion." Her love brings forth the discipline necessary to realize it. Wise refers to this as "spontaneous meditation" where in the present moment she is living her truth. She says that if persons do not respect themselves enough to follow their inner truth, then they borrow techniques and pathways from others. This can be a never-ending process. Another's discipline can never substitute for the inner direction of one's higher self, which calls one to the passion of one's own life. "Life becomes a meditation of being true to yourself." When one has a passion for the piano, developing discipline is not necessary; devotion is a far more powerful force. It is the higher counterpart to discipline. It is inspired rather than learned.

The ultimate devotion for Wise is "staying true to what I know from within." This means being in attunement with her essential self. She differentiates between her essential or spiritual self and her worldly self. Her spiritual or essential self is her higher self that gives her ongoing integrity with all that is. She understands Christ as the higher self, and when the higher self is made manifest in any person, they are expressing the "Christed state." Each human being has potentiality to live the Christed state. The more the spiritual self and the worldly self are superimposed, the more the Christed-self is made manifest. "Any being who can at any moment be informed by the highest potential of the universe is making manifest the God state."

Each time Wise has listened to the directive of her all-knowing spiritual self and translated that directive into the action of her worldly self, she has merged the two into a congruent unity. Wise sees that in knowing the presence of her higher self in her daily action, she is following her bliss. The opportunity for knowing is the great equalizer because it makes all people rich, poor, educated and not equal. "To be true to their heart, to follow their bliss, to do the thing they long to do, that takes courage, a respect of self, trust, and this eliminates separation. That puts one where one really is."

Dishonesty is the block to authentic life. The discovery of personal dishonesty can be a teacher. However, when one knows one's own truth and knowingly violates this truth, "there is pollution in that breath of life." Wise says that whatever is present and is true is the highest value. There is no shame in what is true, only "due humility." To be honest to oneself, and to express one's true self in authentic living is the highest value.

Wise's discipline, then, is living in the present moment. Each moment, even it be the most mundane worldly experience of going to the bank, is precious. There is no constancy; each moment must be taken for whatever it offers. "If I am walking in a state of attunement, then whatever is the tone of the moment, whatever is the tuning fork of the moment, that's the one I will respond to." In this she realizes no moment is higher, more true or better. The discipline is to meet the moment with a full willingness for intimate encounter.

Another type of discipline Wise calls inclusion. Inclusion for her means an awareness that she is a worldly self and also a part of the greater Self. As a part of the greater Self, she is one with the tree, with the bank, with the flowers. What happens in any part of the greater Self relates to her. To illustrate, Wise remembers the first time she, as a vegetarian, was a guest in a home where meat was served, and in that moment, "I knew they were serving me their love," and that love was of greater value than being vegetarian in that moment. Being included in their love, to partake in their meal, was more important than to be excluded by refusing the meat. These lines of Edwin Markham (as quoted by Wise) express her meaning of inclusion:

He drew a circle which shut me out
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout
But love and I had the wit to win
We drew a circle that took him in.

For Douglas Steere, inner silence has been a foundational discipline for most of his life. He refers the interviewer to his several books on the subject. He was introduced to inner silence as a philosophical student at Harvard when he joined a prayer group. The group prayed in silence, but it was a "moving silence," where he first felt the "power of Christ's indwelling spirit sweep through me."¹¹ From the experience of inner silence, he began to have "a wonderful sense of God's presence." In time he joined the Quakers, whose practices are based on inner silence that invites the guidance of an inward Christ.

¹¹ Steere, Gleanings, 17.

Steere does not come to prayer with an agenda, but tries to enter prayer in awesome awareness that "I am besieged by and immersed in a love that is literally without qualification."¹² Prayer, for Steere, is entering into that on-going stream of God's love, and then listening for direction by the Inward Guide. The second aspect of this discipline is taking action on the holy nudges given in the silent prayer. The practice requires openness to the Inward Guide and obedience to the call. Steere quotes the classic, Holy Wisdom, in which Augustine Baker, a seventeenth century Benedictine, wrote, "Mind your call, that's all in all."

For Steere, transformative prayer requires certain conditions such as learning to withdraw from the outer world, to close the door on the outward side in order to enter the inward side of reality. Within the inner silence, one can hear the divine whisper. That silence is the source of human creativity, the ground of all Being. From this ground of pure being, and creativity, all creation springs. In coming to the Source "there is a recovery in gratitude of a principle of order, of an inner relatedness, of compassion, of love."¹³ The deep state of inner silence is characterized by inner spaciousness, receptivity. From the experience of inner silence comes reverence, tenderness and compassion.

¹² Steere, Gleanings, 23.

¹³ Steere, Gleanings, 122.

Human Love and Divine Love

The purpose of this section is to explore human and Divine Love. The purpose of the following interview question is to gain from the interviewees their understanding of the relationship of human love to Divine Love: "Some theologians and psychologists believe that love does not originate in the human psyche but comes from a higher ultimate Source. What are your thoughts based on your personal experience?"

Morton Kelsey, in answer to the question of Divine and human love, says that creative love is the central principle at the heart of the universe, and is certainly more than human love. This Divine Love is revealed in and through the person of Jesus Christ. Human beings are given only a taste of that love which is of God, but in one's journey toward wholeness and fulfillment, more of the truth of love is revealed. "Love gives us our humanity. Love also heals and helps us grow."¹⁴ This Divine Love gradually opens our awareness, but being both physical and spiritual beings, we must learn of both worlds. "This physical world is the womb in which we build our individual personalities"¹⁵ but is not the only in the world. The vision given by God of a world of love, caring and oneness is given that our aim would be to build the kingdom of heaven of love. It is the Divine Lover who draws us toward love. In our humanness we suffer the wounds of poverty, sickness, oppression, anxiety, depression,

¹⁴ Kelsey, Reaching, 93.

¹⁵ Kelsey, Reaching, 33.

ignorance, violence and greed. It is that unconditional love of the Divine Lover that comes to lift us out of our despair. It is that unconditional love which loves us in spite of our failings, anger, lust and fraud. From this love we learn to love not only ourselves, but others. "I am most genuinely able to love when I feel myself loved, released and transformed by God's love."¹⁶

According to Kelsey, many Christian theologians have separated love into two types, eros (desiring love) and agape (self-giving love containing no element of personal desire). For Kelsey these two types are just poles of the one love. If agape love does not have eros, it can degenerate into what Nicholas Berdyaev calls a "glassy Christian love." Eros without agape becomes lust. "Passionate human love and desire are symbols to open our hearts and minds to God's infinite love."¹⁷

Elia Wise says that love has a point of origin in the human psyche that is seeded from a higher ultimate Source. For her, love is the Source and Stimulus for all manifested creation. Love is the ground of pure Being. From this Source, love issues forth, and by its pulsating vibrancy stimulates the creation of all manifestation. Love does not originate in the human psyche. The human psyche contains all of our responses to the First Cause, our choices, our past, and so on. The human psyche is a temporal vessel. The psyche is limited by the collective psyche of the times; there are historical stages of the human psyche just as there are historical stages and epochs of time and history. That pure love, the ground of Being, is filtered through

¹⁶ Kelsey, Reaching, 105.

¹⁷ Kelsey, Reaching, 191.

the human psyche. In this way, love connects human beings to one another. They recognize one another because they recognize a common source of stimulus. As they grow in their human capacity to express love, they more clearly recognize this connection; one's consciousness expands to include the profundity of nature, and it is recognized that human beings have never been separated from their source and one another.

Gerald May, in answer to the question on the origination of love, suggests that in the moments of unitive experience, one senses, "a kind of love in which everyone and everything is immersed, a kind of pre-existing atmosphere in which everything takes place and that is not contingent on any other specific person or thing."¹⁸ This love that permeates all creation and is sometimes known, is God. Neither self-love nor interpersonal love can assuage the hunger for this love. For May, this "love is not a thing we can conjure up within ourselves . . . for all forms of loving have their origin in, and thus are manifestations of, divine, agapic love." The different forms of love, such as narcissistic or filial, arise from the same source of unconditional agape love, but they are processed and expressed through human minds and behaviors. Agapic love is ultimate, unconditional love. May believes that the only human choice in relation to agapic love is to recognize its presence. Communion with this unconditional love satisfies the deep human longing, and leaves one changed. Because this love does not originate from within individual people, it is not subject to individual desires or manipulations. "Love that is felt to be of specifically human

¹⁸ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 87.

origin can never be unconditional." ¹⁹ Human love apart from divine agape love is always conditional. Human love is contingent upon behavior and circumstance and can be withdrawn. Agapic love is not a love that can be learned by human will, or pursued for personal achievement. Human persons cannot achieve Divine Love, although it is possible by defenses and choice to defend against and block it. Self-knowledge and maturation offer rich experience but they do not increase agapic love. One can learn that it is more joyful to give than to receive, but the best a human person can do is to increase willingness. The deepest desire of the seeker is "to be an open and unrestricted channel for this love."²⁰

May further explains that one cannot come to know this unconditional love through reason or even through faith. Only those persons who have the experience of union, the experience of silence, speak of knowing that Divine Love exists."²¹

In answer to the question on the origination of love, Roy Fairchild says that clearly love comes from a higher source. That love which comes only from the human psyche is an incomplete love, which can be very self-serving and possessive. Possessive love lays claim, saying, "This is my wife, my child, my house " Possessive love feeds the ego and seeks to control other people. Possessive parents control their children through over-protectiveness. Incomplete human love often insists on having its own way. The human insistence on "having mine" and "doing it

¹⁹ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 128.

²⁰ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 204.

²¹ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 135.

my way" can result in broken relationships. Jesus teaches of another love, that love which is of God. When Divine Love is amalgamated with human love, it is less possessive, more respectful of the other person. Parents can truly say, "You are not my child, you are a child of the universe." Such love is in awe of the other person, recognizing that person as a divine creation and appreciating the utter individuality of the other person. Human love alone is incapable of this kind of love due to projecting onto the other one's own limitations. Human love is vulnerable and easily hurt. Human love amalgamated with Divine Love aims at increasing the full potential of the other person.

Love for Douglas Steere does not originate within the human heart, but flows from the eternal source of love. He believes that Divine Love is at the heart of things that undergird all human persons. He quotes John Woolman, who said, "Love was the first motion, a love that will not let us go, yet a love that lures us to respond and to follow the biddings of the inward guide."²² Steere says that "Jesus brought the news that love was at the ground of the universe."²³ It is the infinite, yearning love of God that draws the human heart, and it is "the gift of the child of Bethlehem which revealed the cosmic goal of love . . . Jesus came to draw all men into the way of love."²⁴ Quakers believe that deep within the inner sanctuary of the soul is a Divine Center and through this center God is revealed as the Eternal Lover. Inward

²² Steere, Gleanings, 35.

²³ Steere, Together in Solitude, 87.

²⁴ Steere, Together, 85.

orientation or prayer is the longing for the restoration of the awareness of the presence of love and cosmic confirmation that God loves each person. Love is possible only to the degree that the inner heart is opened to that love which is of God. In prayer one can "be awakened to the great gulf stream of love."²⁵ Steere quotes Thomas Traherne:

A love with which into the world I came
In inward hidden heavenly love
Which in my soul did work and move
and ever me inflame.²⁶

Thomas Keating says, in answer to the question on the origin of love, that Divine Love comes from an ultimate source beyond the human psyche, but that human beings are endowed with an emotional attraction to what seems good. Ultimate love, as a manifestation of God's love working in human beings, bears the fruits of the Spirit such as joy, peace and love. God works in and through the human psyche. In each person is a center through which God is accessible. The human part is to prepare one for the "influx of Divine Love."²⁷

The power and love of the higher Source begins to be sown when the mind is quiet and the heart is open. The practice of inner silence or contemplation is basically a trust and a consent to allow oneself to be guided by Divine Love. This Divine Love gradually reveals one's emotional programs and psychic toxins that hold

²⁵ Steere, Together, 25.

²⁶ Steere, Together, 187.

²⁷ Thomas Keating, The Heart of the World, 12.

one in bondage. As one is gradually freed from one's self-centered means of security and dependence on others, love flourishes.

Keating says in the interview that in his experience, "It is when we let God love in us, allow the Divine Love to manifest itself by not pursuing our selfish, self-interest, that love happens." Love happens because we have allowed it, not only by consenting to it, but also by reducing the obstacles that have prevented it. A divine energy of life, light and love is beamed to us twenty-four hours a day. Human beings have a receptive apparatus to translate this into its human expression. That is the human purpose, to love God and neighbor with one's whole energies of mind, heart and spirit. But one places obstacles to this, the highest message of the universe. One's receptive apparatus is captive to the false self's emotional programs and toxins which produce static in the circuits and distort the message. It is only through long practice of inner silence, sometimes through suffering, that by divine therapy the heart is gradually purified. This process usually takes time because human life and evolution are a process. Just as one cannot learn any art or craft without apprenticeship, the body needs long practice to be able to receive the highest message of the universe. Without conditioning, the body would collapse from the intensity of the energy. The transformation is a restructuring of consciousness so that the capacity to be aware of God's permanent presence as caring, nurturing and loving is expanded. Divine love releases the energies that have been used to maintain false dispositions, the self-made image, the persona, and transmutes it into energy for

loving people. Anger is transformed into perseverance and pursuit of the difficult good.

It is the Spirit of God working within that does the transformation when one entrusts oneself to the Spirit. Too many have learned only of the God out there, and do not experience the God within. It is the God within that gently leads one into the knowing presence of love. Humans are always seeking their true self that is infiltrated with the divine energy of love. When the Spirit reveals the false self, one encounters deep spiritual crises, but self-knowledge leads to freedom. Compassion is not a felt emotion, it is a state of being. The experience of being loved by God enables one to accept the false self as it is and then let go of it and journey to the true self. The inward journey to the true self is the way to Divine Love.²⁸ "Our basic core of goodness is our true Self. The center of gravity is God. The acceptance of our basic goodness is a quantum leap in the spiritual journey."²⁹

John Cobb, as a process theologian, does not believe that love originates in the human psyche. God is the Source of all love. Human love involves a trust of the Divine, which allows freedom from the need to control events. In trust, one opens to Divine Love, letting happen whatever will. Cobb uses two analogies to explain his meaning, one an image of control and one an image of trust. In the first, some doctors think the human body is like a machine and see themselves as able to repair what goes wrong. Some doctors see the body as an organism that has all kinds of

²⁸ Keating, Open Mind, Open Heart, 129.

²⁹ Keating, Open Mind, Open Heart, 127.

self-healing, self-growing features, and when something goes wrong, the doctor's role is to remove the impediment to proper functioning. These two attitudes relate to one's self-view. "Do I relate to myself as a will that transcends the body and psyche and imposes its power over them, or do I relate to myself as a complex process within which are redemptive as well as healing processes at work? In this last case, it is important for my ego and will not to get in the way but rather to remove obstacles which inhibit proper functioning." The need to be self-controlled, self-determined, self-possessed, is very different from the willingness to trust God as the healing and redeeming power. The controlling self is usually fragile and weak, whereas the trusting self is resilient, more assured and confident.

Process theology affirms that everything in creation is in process, constantly changing, and that God and human persons are in responsible relationship. The God of the temporal world is dependent upon human responses. Although God is the source of love, of creativity, of novelty, the goad urging us toward new possibilities, God is in relationship with humankind. What one does affects the other.

Love from a process perspective³⁰ is not a human response to an impassive God. Traditional Christianity has viewed God as impassive, as total giving with no need to receive a response from the loved one. This understanding envisions a God with little care or sensitivity to the one loved, an impassionate God without sympathy. Such a God does not suffer when created beings suffer. Process theology suggests that a God who is impervious to suffering would be less than perfect. It suggests

³⁰ Cobb and Griffin, 41-62.

instead a God characterized by two aspects. One aspect of God is eternal, absolute, unchanging and independent. The other aspect is temporal, relatively dependent and constantly changing. God in the world is active, passionate, sympathetic. God is also creative and loving, urging the creation toward greater love and richer experience.

God has introduced into creation novelty, newness, freedom of will. Therefore, God's knowledge of the concrete world is always changing. In each moment there are new, unforeseen happenings in the world, which are the result of human decisions. Traditional theology holds that all events are caused by God, that the power of God controls the course of events. Process theology contends that God does not foreordain or completely control events, but that humans by their decisions play a key role in determining events. Process theology explains that God uses persuasion by introducing into each moment an "initial aim,"³¹ or an impulse toward the best possibility; there is no divine coercion, however. Control, coercion, punishment, rewards are not intrinsic tools of God. A loving God, like a loving person, desires the actualization of those possibilities that bring the richest experience. A loving God does not force and control the one loved.

Kathy Galloway describes love as originating not in the human psyche, but in the center of the Divine. As human love becomes transfused with Divine Love, it gives more and more freely without thought of receiving. This Divine Love gradually removes the internal and exterior barriers that cause human resistance to love. As these resistances are lessened, one becomes more open to the receipt of love from

³¹ Keating, Heart of the World, 53.

others, to the movement of compassion and mercy toward the self, to the recognition of the unique value of others, to the giving of love without expectations, to the embrace of spontaneity in the moment. As human love is infused with Divine Love, it becomes increasingly tender and just. A person has increasing awareness of the Divine Presence in the world together with deepening appreciation and thankfulness. One sees the Divine expressed through nature, imagination, creativity, joy and pain, as well as our relationships with others. Human persons closed to a relationship with Divine Love feel powerless and suffer from anxiety, fear, separation, loneliness. Divine Love opens one to joy, a state of being.

Norman Vincent Peale believes that love originates and has its source in God. That love, which is of God, is like the sunlight; it flows out from God, the Source, and passes through the open heart and is beamed out to others. As the heart becomes more open, it can receive and radiate more love. "The more you open to the Divine, the more you take on." As one is able to forget oneself and to know the other person, one gets on the "Lord's great love beam." He explains that the power which comes from a human person's connection to the God of creation is the greatest power in the universe, exceeding the powerful explosions of nations and even atomic power.³² The connection to God is through prayer. Prayer is the key to love, to successful living, but prayer in depth coupled with faith in the power of God is the way. In order to open to the flow of love, there must be a willingness to let go, to

³² Norman Vincent Peale, Power of the Plus Factor (Carmel, N.Y.: Guideposts, 1987), 122.

accept our helplessness and to ask God humbly and reverently for help. When one comes humbly to God for help, God begins the preparation in the heart for the inward flow of Divine Love.

Sirah Vittase believes love originates from a higher ultimate Source. In states of expanded consciousness, she feels love "that is so great, so overwhelming, so pure, that exists everywhere at the same time, that flows from an ultimate Source." These enlightening experiences have taught her that the process of purification involves surrendering into that ultimate Love. This love is always available but one closes the door to it. Through meditation and prayer one is able to open the door, allowing that Love within the day-to-day process of living.

Vittase describes many times having an enlightened thought. "By enlightened thought I mean a thought that is totally sweet, pure and innocent. If I take the pen and allow the thought to be developed from a very high, loving place, I am surprised at the loving purity and innocence of the knowledge." During these moments, Vittase feels she has physically stepped out of the way, has opened the door of her soul. Some inner flash of awareness needs recognition. There are times she experiences this awareness in a quiet personal way within herself as opposed to expressing it in words.

For Martin Marty, unconditional love does not originate in the human psyche. God is the ultimate source of unconditional love. Love flows and issues forth from this ultimate Source. This love is sustaining, steadfast, available, but there are human blocks to this love. People suffer and build protective shells, turn to manipulating

other people, search for love in materialism, and center themselves in the ego-self and veils of self-protection which limit love. Grace, through love, can reveal these inner blocks. What is important is one's response to this Grace. One can acknowledge the gift of Grace and thereby make it one's own knowledge. A new awareness, an "aha." The centeredness in the self is the opposite of love, and only as one turns to God as the center is unconditional love possible.

Eleanor De Tiger expresses her belief that love is a transcendent energy which feeds us. In this age the heart of creation is beginning to open to receive this love in fuller measure. At this time the female is most able to receive and transmit this love energy. The reason is that women are more comfortable with feelings. The male side of the polarity has greatly developed intelligence. Feelings are more complex than intelligence, because one can think without having integrity. Without integrity in one's feelings, one will always feel pain. Therefore, it is through the female polarity that the heart chakra (center of creation) is opening. One great value is knowing one's truth through one's feelings. Now is a period of worldly chaos as human beings experience a transition period between the ages. Females are not only more comfortable with feelings, they are more accustomed to chaos. This role for women is temporary as creation moves toward the time of real integration of the male and female energies of love. The world will enter a new cycle when the male role takes its proper form. The males become creators when they overcome their need for power and dominance. When the male and female energies are integrated, the great creative work can begin.

Love exists as a universal force whether or not one receives and integrates it into oneself. To receive love is to honor the larger process. The great ones are open to this universal love and live their lives in this love. They have a radiant aura around them, more clearly reflecting universal love. These saintly types become our teachers, our beacons of light. Although they may have followers, their love is directed toward all, not a favored few.

David Hassel discusses human love at length in his book, Searching the Limits of Love. He does not believe that love in its more developed stages can exist apart from God, whom he names the unchosen absolute or secular transcendent. He calls that human love in its most developed form, other-centered love. Other-centered love, in contrast to self-centered love, is "a trustful focusing of the lover's life on the good or ultimate happiness of the beloved although the lover's growth . . . may entail the seeming self-diminishment of sacrifice."³³ Other-centered love has six characteristics: (1) Perduring faithfulness, which has a forever quality; (2) trustful intelligence, which totally accepts the love offered with gratefulness; (3) expansiveness toward a wider community; (4) liberation as lovers gain confidence in their lovableness; (5) wholesome healing that gives a balanced view of the self, the lover and life; and (6) self-sacrifice, in which the lovers would suffer physical and psychological diminishment for the wholesomeness of the other.³⁴

³³ Hassel, Searching the Limits of Love, 23.

³⁴ Hassel, Searching the Limits of Love, 111-17.

Hassel points out that to assert the possibility of other-centered love apart from the dynamic immanence of the unchosen absolute would be an absurdity. The unchosen absolute is experientially known through the six basic characteristics of other-centered love, by the absence of cynicism and by the presence of imperturbable serenity and expansiveness of heart. Self-centered love becomes destructive, divisive, protective of past gains, and is not capable of enduring faithfulness, trust, openness. The unchosen absolute's self-giving increases as those who love grow, in order to expand the lover's freedom, fullness of life, circle of beloved. This self-giving is "to give ultimate value to the lover's other-centered love and to center the love in the total meaning of the universe The unchosen absolute's support of other-centered love is the central meaning of the universe and the ultimate value of humankind's ongoing historical life."³⁵ The unchosen absolute, the lover of all lovers, is revealed in the heart of humankind in its self-giving love.

In answering these last two questions, the interviewees give their own unique interpretation to what are remarkably similar understandings of truth. For most of the interviewees, the proven discipline that has enabled them to grow in love has centered in prayer that opens the inner being to the Divine Presence. Their close communion with the Divine gradually frees them from their inhibitive restrictors to love such as: ego inflation, unforgiveness, self-esteem and so forth. Almost half of the interviewees describe their growth in love as a process toward authenticity, honesty, and the fuller expression of their inner truth, or the true spiritual Self. As

³⁵ Hassel, Searching the Limits of Love, 193.

one person expresses it, "In those moments of authenticity and truth, I feel myself more aligned with the God force."

Also of importance to this study is the fact that all of the interviewees experience and believe that love is the expression of the Divine and that the more a person is unrestricted by psychic inhibitors, the more truly can that person express Divine Love in his/her life.

The following chapter analyzes the answers given in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 in greater depth. Chapter 9 suggests a psycho-spiritual developmental theory of love and Chapter 10 offers conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER 8

Analysis of Research Data

The preceding chapters give some insight into the rich material that the in-depth interviews have made available for study. As pointed out in Chapter 4, the research focus is on the subjective life experience of the interviewees. The research goal is to gain qualitative information from interviewees, who have a well-developed ability to verbalize information from their inner feelings, memories, values, spiritual beliefs and experiences in order to learn more about how human persons mature into the upper reaches of human love. The goals of the research include a search for new theories, investigation into the maturation experience of each interviewee in their ability to love, and an examination of the qualities of love experienced in the upper reaches of human love. The hope throughout this study has been to add to human understanding of love and the process by which it matures.

The task of this chapter is to make accessible the vast interview data in a clear and concise way, and to offer for consideration the main findings and insights which result from the study.

The analysis is designed to: (1) discover common threads in the process of maturing in love that provide information regarding possibilities for all human persons; (2) extract from the material, human wisdom, insights and experiences for others who desire more knowledge on how to grow in love; and (3) identify discoveries that could lead to new theories. The process is very much a distillation process as the material is sifted into more and more capsulized form. In chapters 5, 6 and 7, the vast material from the transcripts has been distilled in the reports. The analysis further distills the data as the material is summarized, separated, categorized and compared. The grounded theory method provides the foundational structure for this process.

The difficulty of the task of compilation is compounded by the fact that each individual is an intricate constellation of life-long psychological, intellectual, physical and spiritual experience. This complexity operates within a fluid, objective field of relationships and circumstances that are constantly impacting the subjective field.

For these reasons, in order to properly reflect the material in each category and sub-category, and for the reader to understand how each person's experience feeds into the general body of information in each category and sub-category, a certain amount of reporting is necessary. In the report on the results, sometimes one voice expresses with concise clarity the experience of others. In such cases, that voice is used as a summation voice for others with similar experience. In some cases the interviewees refer the interviewer to their written works that amplify the discussion of a particular interview question. When written works are used to supplement the

interview, (they are chosen on the basis of the living experience of the interviewee). As an example, David Hassel has written extensively on prayer as he understands it from his own personal prayer life.

The goal of this section of study is subjective information from living subjects in contrast to the literary review of the first section of the dissertation. However, the subjective experience cannot be disassociated from the historical context in which the subjects have lived their lives. The historical and socio-cultural context of the interviewees covers a period of ninety-three years. In some cases, subjects have witnessed the first automobile; lived through world depressions, war, chaos, suffering; and have had to reconcile these realities of the material world with their understandings of the meaning of life. The value for this study is the experience of living human subjects presented with all the challenges of contemporary life.

To analyze and classify the data in appropriate categories and sub-categories, each interview question was assigned a particular color such as green, blue, and so forth. Then each interview was carefully searched for responses pertaining to the interview question. Many times, an early question was amplified later in the interview. This material was highlighted with the appropriate color and subsequently abstracted from the main body and placed in a sub-category named to represent the interview question. The answers from each interview were then placed side by side for analysis and comparison. As a result of this analysis and comparison, certain themes and commonalities of experience emerged. These themes are identified by a category title under which the sub-categories were classified. (See chart p. 214)

Categories of Analysis

Basic Social Structural Process (BSP)

Category I: Early Childhood Experience

Sub-categories: Early Family Experience
 Churches

Basic Social Psychological Processes (BSPP)

Category II: Maturational Changes

Sub-categories: Love of Self
 Love of Others
 Love of Nature
 Love and Enemies
 Love and God
 Maturity in the Aged

Basic Psycho-spiritual Process (BPSP)

Category III: Love and the Divine (God)

Sub-categories: The Divine as Source
 The Divine as Universal Energy
 The Divine as Personal

Category IV: Love and the Human Spiritual Self

Sub-categories: Qualities of Spiritual Self
 Relationship to Grace

Category V: Characteristics of Love in the Upper Reaches

The main themes or categories are entitled: (1) Early Childhood Experiences; (2) Maturational Changes; (3) Love and the Divine; and (4) Love and the Human Spiritual Self. These main categories are further classified under designated process titles. Because all the interviewees describe experiences of a spiritual nature, the Basic Psycho-Spiritual Process (BPSP) was created as a general classification, in addition to the Basic Social Structural Process (BSSP) and the Basic Socio-Psychological Process (BSPP), which describe the more social and psychological aspects of human behavior. From the chart it can be seen that the central themes are identified as the categories. The sub-categories are more specific divisions of these central themes or categories.

The following is a summary and analysis of the material within each category. The common experiences are described in a statistical manner in order to give the reader an idea of how many of the nineteen interviewees have had similar experiences.

Early Childhood Experience

The human person is a social being, influenced by environmental conditions. In the literary review, studies showing the importance of love in early life were cited. In this interview section the question regarding childhood family life provides valuable insight into the influences that formulate the earliest feelings about love. The

underlying question is: to what degree does a nurturing and loving environment contribute to the maturation of love in adulthood?

Early Family Experience

When asked about early family experience, each interviewee first answered with an emotional memory of a positive or negative family life, saying, "I had an awareness of being loved," or, "My childhood was very painful." Of the nineteen interviewees, three had painful memories of physical abuse and extreme family dysfunction. In all three families the father was severely abusive, and the mother, due to weakness and dependency on the father, was unable to support the child. In one of the three families, the mother was herself abusive, taking her helplessness and rage out on the child. In all three family situations, the family lived in a chaotic, depressing and isolated atmosphere. Only one of three children had an advocate in the person of the grandmother. The other two children felt a loving advocate in God. The latter two emotionally retreated from the pain of the immediate objective reality into an inner space protected by God or angels. This sustained them through the most painful times. One said, "This earth father is not my real father." In adulthood, these three interviewees have forgiven their earth fathers for their cruelty, but none has established warm, loving relationships with the father. Although some theologians have suggested that a strongly negative father relationship makes a relationship with a Father God very difficult, the information here suggests that this

is not necessarily the case. For two of the three children their refuge was in their vision of a loving Father-God.

These early family memories reflect a wide diversity of human experience. The results indicate that the degree to which a human person is cradled in love as a child is not the only determining factor in a person's later ability to love. That the vast majority of abusive parents have themselves been abused as children is an accepted fact. However, what is unknown is why some abused children grow into loving adults despite their early abuse. What makes some abused children turn toward love, and others turn toward a hate? The findings of this preliminary study indicate that a loving, nurturing environment in early childhood is not a prerequisite to the maturation of love in adulthood. The majority of the interviewees suffered the pain of rejection by one parent. Only one person describes an ideal childhood in which family and church community were loving.

The findings reported in Chapter 1 which indicate that the deprivation of love in infancy and early childhood seriously injures the ability to love in later life are not repudiated here. What does seem important to note is that despite the pain and suffering of abuse and love deprivation, the human longing for love is such a strong motivating factor in human life that it is not easily destroyed. What appears to be the case is that this longing for love can be diverted toward life-diminishing patterns or life-enhancing patterns of behavior.

This study validates that three children, victims of extreme abuse as children, have grown into loving adults. Of these, two interviewees describe experiencing in

childhood peak experiences of unity, feelings of connection to nature, of belonging to another reality. They felt a direct connection to a source of love that was not from this world. One person describes an experience of angels surrounding her and ministering to her during the pain following an abusive parental attack. Another person speaks of feeling a warm surrounding glow that felt safe and that in retrospect would be called loving. Is the love they felt a child's fantasy, or is Divine Love received through the open, vulnerable heart of a child? A valuable research study might investigate the spiritual experiences of abused children and the correlation between those and the later ability to love.

Early Church Influence

An analysis of church influence during early childhood reveals that only six people report a centrality of the church. For six persons, the church was an extended family, a second home, a place of security and friendship. In one case the father was a Protestant minister. In another case the parents were missionaries. In the third and fourth cases, the Catholic Church was the life focal-center in which each child felt a sense of affection for the nuns and priests. As a result of attending Catholic schools, friends were Catholics and with these friends they enjoyed a strong sense of community. In the fifth case, the Congregational Church, with "two wonderful ministers" and loving Sunday School teachers, became a place of belonging and happiness. In the sixth case, the child lived with grandparents who were "pillars of the church." Bible reading was a part of family life. Of these six children, two would

later become Catholic priests, three Protestant ministers, and one, the wife of a minister. For these six people, the church has been central throughout their lives.

The analysis reveals that eight other interviewees attended church, but the church was more an addendum than a central focus to family life. In these families, one or both parents were nominal Christians. The supposition here is that the early church experience, though nominal, was an influencing factor. All eight have become dedicated Christians in their work; two are priests, four are ministers, two are Christian counselors.

Five other persons discuss an absence of church experience and have independently sought their own spiritual path. One has found meaning in Eastern practices, three in inner mystical experience and one in a universal belief system in which all religions are acknowledged. Two of the three who are mystical in their approach speak of a cosmic Christ. An interesting note: none of these five persons without early church influence, has ever been an active member of an organized church.

All nineteen interviewees can be described as spiritually oriented, that is, giving foundational value to the spiritual dimensions of human life and experience. Although two are medical doctors with scientific background, they strongly emphasize the importance of spiritual life to the wholeness of life.

Socio-economic Evaluation

The socio-economic circumstances of eighteen of the families of the interviewees were modest to poor. None of the interviewees as children, except one, was exposed to material abundance, nor given unusual social advantages. Although several mention the hard times of the Depression, none of the interviewees expresses a sense of childhood economic deprivation. As one interviewee says, "We were poor, but good poor." Only one interviewee, the child of an affluent family, belonged to a higher economic stratum. Conversely, he expresses some sense of emotional deprivation by being in the constant care of maids.

Maturational Changes

This section of the data addresses one very critical question of this study: Can human love mature into higher possibilities than normally seen? The interviewees were first asked if their ability to love has matured over the course of their lives, and then in what way their specific relationships have been changed. The goal has been to get some insight into how this maturation is manifested in the dynamic relationships of daily life.

When asked if their ability to love has matured over their lifetime, seventeen of the nineteen interviewees have responded affirmatively. Two interviewees have hesitated to answer affirmatively since they are not sure whether their love is ever unconditional. May says, "I don't necessarily feel more loving after all these years of

spiritual pursuit, although my understanding of love has changed. I now feel that we are created for love, that love is what we are here for." He believes that for love to be unconditional, it must be consistent love, no matter what the conditions. For himself, he is aware that he has his limits, limits beyond which love would stop. Kelsey, the second interviewee who qualifies his affirmation that he has grown in his ability to love, says that "you can only trust ultimately that which is unconditionally caring, and as I see the scope of Divine Love, I find myself with a long way to go." These two interviewees are measuring their own ability to love by the yardstick of unconditional, agape, Divine Love. They both express that they have grown in love of self, and the love of others, but perhaps not in the unconditional dimension of Divine Love.

The other seventeen interviewees answer with emphatic affirmation that they have grown in their ability to love. They do not imply that they have reached the perfected state of living Divine Love, but each to varying degrees has experienced maturation in the relationships about which they are questioned.

Love of Self

When all interviewees are analyzed with respect to change in capacity to love the self, all nineteen interviewees answer affirmatively. The following is an abbreviated sampling that gives an example of how the interviewees' answers were arranged together for the analysis and comparison.

I've become more tolerant, seeing myself more objectively.

I am more accepting of my limitations, not making them good or bad.

I have more self-acceptance, less guilt, less judgment, experience sexuality as normal, healthy.

I am not bound by cultural paradigms, but I honor my true self and desire to give expression of my spiritual self through my material self.

I feel much less guilt much less need to compare myself with others. I can accept my dark as well as light. I am giving myself more freedom to enjoy, to pursue previously denied areas of interest.

I feel less anger toward myself for my failures, more contentment with my limitations. As I have accepted my own inner poverty, I have learned to depend more on Divine assistance.

I feel more freedom to be myself and to take risks, more acceptance of my imperfections, more respect for the care of my health and appearance, more openness and reception to the love given me by others.

I have learned to trust my intuition and in so doing, I feel more in touch with my inner love and in alignment with God's will, less dominated by the ego-will. I accept and give myself permission to experience feelings of anger, fear.

Several of the interviewees speak of their loving others in greater depth as they have grown in feelings of self-appreciation and self-love. One person describes self-love as recognizing the love which is given to her, and that growth in love has meant opening her inner being to receiving Universal Love in its many expressions, through other persons, through nature, and so on. In opening to love, she feels filled, enriched, and the love overflows out to others. For another interviewee, to love the self means to honor the self, to allow the self freedom to unfold and reveal itself. This requires accepting feelings as valuable and valid, whether they are painful, angry or joyful. It requires attentiveness in the moment, being totally present and allowing what is, to be. All of the interviewees touch on this theme of loving the self through

listening to the inner feelings and giving these feelings permission to speak. The more congruency between inner and outer feelings, the more the sense of authenticity and self-love. Most of the interviewees speak of a growing appreciation for the wounded self that results in an easing of critical self-judgment. Several express distancing themselves from cultural values and of giving more value to the inner needs of the self. What others think becomes less important and less a motivating factor. Love of the self is caring for the inner truth of the true Self. De Tiger says, "I must learn to honor my inner knowledge and not emulate another's reality."

Most of the interviewees express a growing acceptance of their shadow side, of the feelings once rejected because they are unacceptable. As self-understanding grows, the causal factors for feelings become more clear and forgiveness of the self is possible. As Brother John expresses it, "I am treating myself with the same kindness, tolerance and forgiveness that I would give another." The common experience is that as one grows in self-love, the feelings are given more value. De Tiger says, "I can know the truth of who I am through my feelings, which do not lie." Feelings are not judged as good or bad, but are seen as purveyors of authentic experience. Several interviewees speak of feeling less judgmental toward others when they look honestly at their own weaknesses, failings and limitations. For these interviewees, a definite correlation between tolerance toward self and tolerance toward others is evident.

Four interviewees speak of self-love as a growing respect and increased trust of the self. These persons increasingly trust the intuitive level of experience, and

their spontaneous reaction to the moment. In this trust there is less need to control one's world, and more freedom to let life flow, "to take it as it comes." One person describes feeling "openly flowing, something of the winds, the watery streams, the flows of nature." Another speaks of feeling more free to take risks, set out upon uncharted waters. This intuitive level of knowledge appears to be experienced as coming from the Divine Center of the spiritual Self. Trust of intuition, the interviewees believe, puts them in proper alignment with the will of the spiritual Self, which is also experienced as congruent with the will of God. Trust of Self and trust of God grow simultaneously.

One interviewee speaks passionately of the need for self-love, saying that saving self-love is not selfishness, but responsible action. We are responsible for our becoming, for faithfulness to our talents, gifts, inner integrity. It is only as we become aware of the Self as spirited existence that true intimacy is possible. We are always in the process of creating the self.

For the several interviewees who lacked self-confidence and suffered low self-esteem as children, the experience of God's Unconditional Love gives them a realization that they are lovable and worthy of love despite their human failings. Knowing the infinity of God's love "freed something in me which made me better able to love myself."

An analysis of the human experience shared in these interviews shows that human persons can and do grow in self-love. This growth has been characterized as: (1) opening to love from its many expressions; (2) accepting feelings as valuable; (3)

appreciating the wounded self and transforming guilt to forgiveness; (4) integrating the shadow side; (5) reducing negative judgment of self and others; (6) increasing trust of self and of God; and (7) realizing that one is precious to a loving God. Less self-judgment and control do not imply a complacency toward weakness and failures, but an easing of unrealistic expectations for perfection and a compassion toward the struggling self.

Love of Others

The evidence of this research demonstrates that persons can and do grow in the ability to love. This growth is reflected in all of their relationships. In addition to growing in self-love and self-respect, the interviewees reveal an increasing respect and love for others. A general recognition is expressed among the interviewees that to love means to be in relationship, and that love is lived out in a community of family, friends, church, and so forth. Some say learning to love those in closest relationships can be the most challenging. As Morton Kelsey says, "If I do not love my family, the rest of my love may be only a facade. It is within the community that love relationships can flourish and are always tested."

Seven interviewees feel that for love to be complete and whole it must be reciprocal, that is, to love is not only to give love, but to love is also to receive love. To give without receiving love thwarts the process. Therefore, learning to open to love from others is critical to growing in love.

Several interviewees indicate that true love for others requires shifting one's gaze from oneself (narcissism) to the other. With eyes less focused on the self, one can see the other person with x-ray eyes, observing the uniqueness, the suffering, pain, inner beauty of the other, recognizing the other as a divine creation. As the capacity for love increases, seven interviewees report more patience, tolerance, compassion for others.

Analysis demonstrates that all nineteen interviewees believe that their boundaries have extended outward to include a greater range of people. Gradually they have moved away from a sense of personal separation and concentration on human differences, toward a recognition of human connectedness, of each being a part of the whole. One person expresses it, "We are all an expression of something that we share together." As boundaries extend, there is a sense that "all children are my children," and a deepening concern for the health and well being of all people. Some express a desire to assist others in their spiritual journey, believing that the "gates of heaven do not close until the last person enters."

For one interviewee, to compare persons, making some more valuable than others in a hierarchical evaluation, is a negation of grace. Several persons tell of feeling angry about human injustice as they have grown more loving.

Eight of the interviewees stress the importance of identifying with inner truth and integrity and say that true intimacy with others comes from sharing one's inner truth. Unless one can share from this level of truth, one is isolated from others and is not alive. For Ross Snyder, "Growing in aliveness means growing in ability to

relate meaningfully to others." Another person says that loving is "demonstrating the truth of my being." Many persons discuss self-love and self-respect as essential to the love and respect of others. Self-love, they believe, grows in relationship to living one's inner truth.

Six persons discuss the necessity of leaving the community that demands conformity to the norm, or adherence to strict and outdated rules of fashion or custom. At times this requires painful breaks with cultural dictums, but as one grows in love, there is an increasing value and trust given the inner, true Self. Several people talk of trust being the basis for love in relationships, but trust that grows out of authentic and honest expression. As a person grows in self-understanding and self-honesty, he or she becomes more real, transparent, trustworthy. To trust someone who hides feelings and masks the true Self is most difficult and makes genuine love impossible.

Some excerpted comments on love in relationships to other people are:

Intimacy is awareness of the other as a spirited existence.

Love is being tuned in, being in resonance with another.

In a love relationship, one is loved for oneself.

Genuine love is not possessive or coercive, but is appreciative.

Love is the creative fidelity to each other's growth.

Real love is not limited by space or time.

Our love is centered in the Presence.

Love is everywhere, if we are able to open to it.

A comparison of interviewee answers reveals the individuality and uniqueness of each person. When asked how they experienced change in their love toward others, each interviewee discussed a particular aspect with no two answers the same. Although the answers offer a wide range of insight, certain underlying themes emerge in the analysis. These are that: (1) love is an act of receiving as well as giving; (2) love is experienced in relationship to another person; (3) love is built on trust, a trust that comes from the authenticity and honesty of each person in the love relationship; (4) love does not make some people more valuable than others in a hierarchial way; (5) love turns the focus from the self to the other person, (6) it deplores injustice and cares for the well-being of others; (7) it extends boundaries to include an increasing number of people; (8) it perceives the other beyond superficialities, empathizing with the other's pain, suffering, goodness and so forth; (9) it inhibits negative judgment of the other and increases patience and tolerance; (10) it does not control, possess or coerce the other; and (11) it appreciates the other and nurtures the other's growth.

Love of Nature

All interviewees express the feeling that they have expanded their appreciation of the natural order, with one describing the earth as the "nurturing spiritual mother, the great eternal feminine." For this person the earth is a sensuous place, with life springing forth in the sensuality of color, smells, textures, tastes and with the diversity and multiplicity providing challenge, complexity, choice. Angels are great, but they

have no free choice, "cannot run away and be naughty." The earth is a place of dynamic life.

Other interviewees comment on the inter-relatedness of the whole of creation. Each person is an integral part within the whole, with God as the master creator, and love as the purpose of the creation. One person says that as he has grown in love, he has grown in appreciation for all that God loves, perceiving the Divine Presence not only in himself and in others, but also in nature. He describes a growing perceptive ability which enables him to penetrate the external level and to perceive the presence and goodness of God on the intuitive level. He expresses that pleasures are not to be held onto, but are intended to be messages of love from God. Several interviewees describe acquiring "eyes to see" beyond the surface, to see the trees glow in winter, to feel God's Presence in a wheat field, in a waterfall, on the Isle of Iona. Others speak of their growing awareness of God in all creation, of nature as an expression of love. A major theme of the interviews is appreciation for a God who would create such beauty. With this appreciation, many interviewees talked of their sense of responsibility to care for the earth, neither depleting nor abusing creation, but sustaining it in order to pass it on to future generations.

One interviewee speaks of his placing a deep value on all living things and his pain at witnessing a natural process in which animals feed on one another. Another interviewee says that although he cannot explain the suffering within nature, he perceives that Divine Goodness underlies and is mysteriously present in ways we do not understand. He has come to trust that there is a meaning beyond his

understanding, yet he feels committed to doing whatever he can to remedy suffering where he finds it.

The analysis reveals that the general commonalities among the interviewees in regard to nature are: (1) an increasing awareness of the unity and interrelatedness of all creation; (2) a sense of Divine presence within all the diverse expressions of creation; (3) a sense of personal responsibility for stewardship of the natural order; and (4) a deepening appreciation for the beauty of creation.

Love and Enemies

In reviewing this data, analysis indicates that the interviewees have all expanded their concept of enemy from an attack-or-defend-against-enemies understanding. Instead, they value the so-called enemy for psychological or spiritual lessons, or the opportunity to make the enemy a friend through love. In discussing how this attitude change has occurred, several responses are particularly noteworthy. One person says that enemies are reflections of the rejected self, that what we reject in another is what is rejected in the self. Enemies reveal to us our weaknesses, pettiness, jealousies, angers. In wanting to attack another person, she has to ask herself why she is feeling insecure or defensive and what reactive patterns in herself are being activated. This suggests projection: that we see in others what we do not like in ourselves. For this interviewee, "enemies" are now seen as teachers who put one in touch with hidden shame and passion. Enemies are there to guide us to that new level of love within ourselves.

Another person says that enemies are opposing forces that offer one an opportunity to learn who one is by actually feeling the feelings of anger, rage, hurt and pain. This makes these emotions real, not abstract concepts. Even wars between individuals and nations are discovery processes in which humanity learns the pain of such action. Humanity is in an evolutionary process, gradually learning by crude and painful lessons what it means to break something precious in another person, or to hurt and kill human beings. Hopefully through this learning, humankind moves toward greater humanity.

Two interviewees speak of their growing difficulty to judge others, as they look more honestly at themselves. Self-knowledge reveals the inner dark side, the hidden angers and passions and the recognition that all humans suffer the predicament of illusion. The sense of human belongingness makes enmity a divisive concept in which the self is idealized as good, the enemy as bad. As self-understanding matures, both the self and the other are seen as neither good nor bad, but as human beings struggling to cope with life. At times one may need to defend oneself against the violence threatened by another, but even in cases of emotional or physical violence one can understand that there are reasons for violent behavior. Two interviewees speak of praying for their enemies, of asking for their healing, their reconciliation. Peale says that he beams prayer not only to people in pain or difficulty, but also to those who threaten or harm others. Through practice, he has experienced the love from God passing through him to the other person as he has become an agency to

communicate God's love. Peale says, "Love thoughts do reach others." Through this process of beaming love, former enemies can become close friends.

The analysis of this material indicates that the interviewees have an expanded understanding of the concept of enmity. They have moved from the mindless reactive patterns of returning blow for blow, to more creative and reasoned ways of seeking understanding and reconciliation. They have a broader vision of the dynamics of loving the enemy. Enemies are seen, not as personal foes, but more as wounded, hurting beings who in frustration and pain strike out to wound others. The interviewees appreciate the unity and interrelatedness of all living beings. Rather than making a separatist modality of sharp distinctions between the good and the bad, they view human beings as valuable, regardless of their malevolent behavior. Although malevolent behavior is not condoned, the interviewees generally understand the frailties and imperfections of the human condition. Several interviewees attest that the so-called enemy serves to teach one about one's inner psychological toxins: angers, judgments, ambitions, and so on. The so-called enemy can trigger repressed hostilities and hold these up for conscious perception. As the interviewees have grown in the ability to love, their love has extended out broadly to include the so-called enemy and neutralize enemy animosity through understanding and love.

Love and God

Although this category is a part of the questions on maturation, it is discussed under the category "Love and the Divine" within the Basic Psycho-spiritual Process section.

Maturity in the Aged

The life stories, experiences and beliefs of the interviewees have provided the interviewer with a rare opportunity to study the life-long journey of remarkable models of human persons. The majority of interviewees are past the fifty-year mark, with fourteen of the nineteen, fifty or older. These seasoned warriors of life have not been spared the "hard rub" of life; all have suffered internal woundedness and struggled with psychological toxins: low self-esteem, anger and alienation. They have faced personal, inner demons within an outer disharmonic world of catastrophic disorder. To weave meaning into life, to grow in love amidst world malevolence, to find beauty and hope within disorder is to be victorious. These interviewees are victorious warriors. Maslow would call them highly actualized models of human potentiality.

Five persons, ranging in age from seventy to ninety-three years, are living examples of those who reach old age with wisdom and integrity, as described by Erik Erikson.¹ Consistent with the attributes described by Erikson, these persons exemplify an enthusiasm for life, vital interest in others and the world and

¹ Erik Erikson. The Life Cycle Completed (New York: Norton, 1982), 61-66.

compassionate presence as characteristics of the well-lived aged. The eldest interviewee, Norman V. Peale, at age ninety-three, is remarkable for his robust love and enthusiasm for life. The author of thirty-six books (one currently in process), he sends a newsletter to fifteen million readers monthly, lectures world-wide, preaches in New York's Marble Collegiate Church. Although his accomplishments are admirable, his most impressive accomplishment is himself, living the truth of his book, Stay Alive All of Your Life. The interviewer is struck by his personal warmth, attentive presence, and physical agility. He looks twenty years younger than his ninety-three years and is intellectually sharp, showing a sincere interest in others and in his world.

The three octogenarians, Dorothy and Douglas Steere and Ross Snyder, are equally inspirational, each reflecting a loving warmth, radiant kindness and concern. Snyder, who has been physically restricted by a stroke, speaks of the need to celebrate life, to build God's kingdom of love, to realize our human magnificence, to find our place in a beloved community. This person has spent his life writing about and teaching authentic life or the full life engagement. He speaks of his loving relationship with a mate of sixty years, two "wonderful sons" (one a heart specialist, the other a psychiatrist and ordained minister) and seven grandchildren. The Steeres, also married sixty years, speak of their love, centered in "another Presence," growing stronger through the years. That inner dimension of love serves as the "referral point that we've counted on in our marriage, that has deepened and strengthened our love for one another." This richer love extends out to their married daughters and

grandchildren. These two people have also spent their lives teaching and exemplifying the spiritual life. Now in their old age, they continue their meaningful work and enjoy the fullness of their lives. All four of these well-aged persons exhibit qualities of inner peace, enthusiasm for life.

Morton Kelsey, in his seventies, is equally enthusiastic about life. The author of many books on the spiritual life, he seeks to nurture his own spiritual life as well as the lives of others as a Protestant priest, lecturer, spiritual guide and counselor. He has also pursued an inner psychological quest through Jungian psychology and an inner spiritual life through Christian faith. A teacher, he maintains a busy work schedule. He tells of facing his shadow side, of his human attempts to come to grips with death, anger and love. His inward journey, like Jung's, gives illumination to the inward side of all humanness.

These five exemplify many of the characteristics of the aged that Erik Erikson describes as the eighth stage of the life cycle when persons resolve the crisis of integrity vs. despair on the side of integrity. Erikson, a psychoanalyst in the field of human development says, "Only he who in some way has taken care of things and people and adapted himself to the triumphs and disappointments of being . . . only he may gradually grow the fruit of the seven stages" [of previous life development].² Some fruits of the seven previous stages are hope, fidelity, love, generativity and wisdom.³ By generativity, Erikson means "a care of the person, the products the

² Erik Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle, 104.

³ Erikson, The Life Cycle Completed, 56-8.

ideas one has learned to care for."⁴ In generativity there is a desire to share knowledge and experience with younger generations, to give back. The antithesis of generativity is stagnation; the antithesis of integrity is despair. Erikson's is an epigenetic model in which each stage builds on an integration of all previous stages.

Love and the Divine

As reported in Chapter 5, every interviewee describes experiences of Divine Love, although each person's experience is unique, and expresses a diversity of religious approaches to spirituality. The interviewees affirm both transcendent and immanent reality. The transcendent aspect of this reality is referred to variously as God, the Unbounded, Unchanging Absolute, Pure Being, the Universal Presence, Divine Love. The immanent aspect of this reality is referred to as: the Christed-Self; Christness, Holy Spirit, Godness within, empowering Presence, indwelling Spirit, inner Christ or true Christ Self.

Divine As Universal Energy

Six of the nineteen interviewees have no affiliation with an organized religion. These six, however, describe knowing a transcendental or supernatural dimension of reality which is characterized by love. Five of these six interviewees have experienced in moments of meditation what they characterize as an unbounded expanse of radiant

⁴ Erikson, The Life Cycle Completed, 67.

energy. They refer variously to this fundamental energy as love, the primal vibration of all creation, the heartbeat of the universe, a flow that is always available whether used or not. Five other interviewees, all members of organized religions, express knowing this field of energy. May speaks of this experience of awareness as a

moments of expanded consciousness that seem vast and spacious, with dimensions and limits that are unfathomable if they exist at all. It seems powerful and dynamic, as if it represents a kind of energy [hence "spirit"] but it is an energy beyond understanding. At the same time, that consciousness seems very much alive and active, it appears to reflect a supreme constancy, an abiding solidity that is totally uninfluenced by any of its contents. As such, it can feel like a bedrock, a ground upon which all of life's experiences and activities are founded. And yet, even so, it seems to have no substance.⁵

The descriptions of these ten interviewees indicate experiences of a radiant energy that they believe permeates all of creation and is characterized as love. This transcendent love, which is the essence of life, is like the original material from which each created form is fashioned. Love is the medium of all existence. One person says love is the fabric which weaves us together: plants, animals, water, sky, mineral, vegetable, everything. Love is the permeating energy of life. For one interviewee, love which is of God, is like the sunlight. It flows out from God, the Source, and passes through the human heart and is beamed out to others. As the heart becomes more open, it can receive and radiate more love. Another person describes this energy as having the vibratory rhythm that originates all life. If one were able to attune oneself to the sound, one would hear its heart beat in all of creation. This is the founding vibration, quality, demonstration of Goodness from which all things are

⁵ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 45-46.

made related. One person speaks of having moments of feeling "bathed" in this energy.

Vettese describes a moment transcending the boundaries--boundedness--of her body, and feeling the state of unbounded oneness with God, in which she is her pure spiritual Self. This is a state of absolute stillness and peace. Kelsey describes this kind of union with God as "an experience of losing one's ego, of dissolving into the very marrow of the universe. It gives a sense of identity, oneness, ecstasy and bliss."⁶

The important element of this data is that all nineteen subjects, regardless of religious persuasion, report a direct knowledge of the spiritual dimension of life through subjective experience. Ten describe their knowledge of the unbounded Divine in remarkably similar language, using words such as energy, radiance, unboundedness, infinite permeation, pure love, peace, unity and wholeness.

The Divine As Source

The nineteen interviewees strongly agree that love does not originate in the human psyche, that love is not a human creation. A common theme among the interviewees is well summarized in Morton Kelsey's statement that "creative love is the central principle at the heart of the universe." This creative love permeates all of creation, but human beings are given only glimpses of its fullness and beauty. Bloomfield describes God's love as a beautiful rainbow that stretches the heavens, but humans are able to see only a small band of color. The Divine Lover, according to

⁶ Kelsey, The Other Side of Silence, 134.

Kelsey, calls one to love, and no amount of human love can assuage the deep human longing to abide in this Universal Love.

May says that this love that is God is creative, all pervasive like air, available at each moment, inexpressible. His assumption is that the different manifestations of love have origins in agape and share a common ground of energy. This Love, according to Keating, is unconditional, unlimited giving, sending rain on the just and unjust. The interviewees commonly express that false values (attachment to greed, self-aggrandizement, negative power, and so forth) and psychological toxins (anger, fear, pain, fraudulent self-image, controls and manipulations, and so forth) restrict the receiving and giving of Unconditional Love. As a result, most human love is conditional, impure to varying degrees depending on the amount of inhibitions. Keating says that these inhibitions restrict the inflow of Unconditional Love and are like static in a circuit which deletes or distorts the message. May believes that pure, universal, Unconditional Love is filtered through the human psyche and is distorted by a false self-image.

The Divine As Personal

Thirteen of the nineteen interviewees are active members of organized religions. These people, plus three non-religious interviewees, sixteen interviewees in all, describe Divine Love as having a personalized center called the Christ. Jesus, Christ, is understood by thirteen of these interviewees to be the material manifestation in human form of this Unconditional Love. Jesus Christ comes into the

world to reveal the Kingdom of Love, and love as the purpose of creation. For Nesbitt, Christ is a demonstration of how to open to love, and the Second Coming means that Christness is increasingly manifest in humanity. Wise speaks of Christ as a luminous being, Spirit made manifest in the pure state, and the more she is her spiritual integrity the more she is in her own Christed state. Keating says that "through our consent by faith, Christ is born in us and He and our true Self become one."⁷ He continues that you become "aware that your true Self is Christ expressing himself in you."⁸ May describes this as "God is both manifest in us and at the same time eternally transcendent."⁹ Peale says that "the love of God passing through you to others affects others like the sunlight." These interviewees experience both an inner Christ center through which the immanent Christ is available and the outer transcendent Christ of the universe. The inner Christ is known as an inner voice, an inner guide, which gently urges one toward love. Kelsey reveals that for him, this inner Christ is personal, compassionate, caring, the Eternal Lover. Christ, as the inner guide, leads one toward greater freedom, truth, love, peace, and to closer alignment with one's true Self.

Three of the nineteen interviewees do not describe the energy field of love as having a personal dimension like the Christ. For them, this energy field has a sense of alive presence, but no individualized personality.

⁷ Keating, Open Mind, Open Heart, 12.

⁸ Keating, Open Mind, Open Heart, 103.

⁹ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 67.

Interviewees describe experiencing Divine Love in moments of meditation, through Divine Guidance, through the beauty of a waterfall, a flowing wheat field, blooming flowers, in the presence of a beloved, in moments of deep anguish, grief, suffering, in the midst of a beloved community.

Divine Love has touched the hearts of interviewees through the power of music, art, inspirational writings. From the reports of the interviewees, love can be known through every human preceptor of touch, sound, sight, taste, smell and by the intellectual, emotional and sexual faculties. The key factor in knowing Divine Love is receptivity and openness to Divine Love in its infinite expressions. The ability to open to Divine Love is further discussed under the heading, "Maturation of Love," in this chapter.

In analyzing the material from the question on the changes toward God, certain commonalities of experience become apparent. The general themes in the data are: (1) That God is both transcendent to creation, above and beyond creation, and immanent within the true Self; (2) that God is both impersonal and personable, incomprehensible and knowable; (3) that God is infinite potentiality and this potentiality is realized in interaction with the created order; (4) that God is the wholeness in which all else exists; (5) that God is trustworthy, urging each person to a richer possibility; and (6) that God is love and the more that we trust and surrender to this love, the more we grow in love.

Love and the Human Spiritual Self

Analysis of the data shows that in addition to the experience of the interviewees of an infinite Transcendent Love, eight of the interviewees describe an awareness of a higher or spiritual Self within themselves. This spiritual Self (Self is capitalized to indicate its divine nature) is the authentic Self, and the self presented to the world is authentic to the degree that it expresses the spiritual Self. May discusses the differences between the self-image and the true Self and speaks of the obstacles which litter and distort love according to the individual's experience.¹⁰ The spiritual Self has the capacity to receive Divine Love and transmit this love into the outer world. The true Self, according to Keating, is infiltrated with divine energy, and to open to Divine Love, one must willingly choose to be the love that one is. According to Keating, a false self is a misrepresentation of the pure spiritual Self, due to the accumulation of psychic toxins, inhibitors, failures, and so on. However, in spiritual growth, the false self needs to be understood, loved and integrated.

Qualities of the Spiritual Self

Wise describes the essential Self, or spiritual Self, as an on-going integrity of identity from the first moment of existence. Another interviewee speaks of this Self as "the truth I was meant to be," a center of aliveness, an authentic integrity. One person defines this essential Self as the higher Self and the purpose of life as an alignment of the higher Self with God. Nesbitt speaks of "my being expanding into a fullness, of my coming totally into the whole." In these moments of peak

¹⁰ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 122-5.

experience, there is "a feeling of deep peace and awe, a sense of paying attention with my whole being," a feeling of overwhelming reverence. In these moments, she knows the essence of who she truly is, not only an autonomous individuality, but an integral part of the whole. This she describes as an experience of pure love.

Wise consciously recalls the moment in time at age four when she became bounded in her body. In the interview she relates becoming aware for the first time

of entering my body, as locating my identity there. I had a recognition that I had been somewhere else before, because why was I locating here for the first time? That place was a universal kind of place, an energy location. It wasn't about places or things, it was about a state of attunement, a training at a certain rhythm of being. It was shocking to realize that I was going to be related to as an objective phenomenon instead of a presence or an energy or a spirit.

De Tiger relates feeling both an outer objective identity to which others relate and an inner spiritual soul-Self. She speaks of the frustration of not integrating these two and having others see the external expression as the true Self. She calls the external expression her personality, and the internal essence her soul. In those times of attunement with God or the Universal Presence, she feels integrated, harmonious, happy. In this state, her outer personality is expressing her inner soul.

Three interviewees express frustration that they are unable to translate the love they have received in the inner spiritual center into an outer worldly expression. These persons describe an awareness that they have inner psychic inhibitions which prevent the full expression of the pure love. For Keating the inner spiritual center is like a radio receiver, which due to weakness and disorder transmits static. Keating refers to the worldly self as the false self which can be self-centered, self-seeking, self-

serving. To lose one's life means to give up the false self. The encounter between the false self and the true Self leads to a deep spiritual crisis due to the power of the false self.

May contrasts self-image and true self. The self-image is not the true Self. The self image is a complex of sensations, impressions and concepts of the Self. It is descriptive, but not the real thing. "The true self, whatever its nature, seems to lie beyond, behind, around or in some other relation to the qualities of self-image, in a different dimension of consideration."¹¹ The true Self, or what is often referred to as *soul*, essence, or fundamental reality of being, evades comprehension; it is a mystery, according to May. The self-image is a way of defining the Self and doing business in the world. How the self-image affirms or devalues itself determines many basic attitudes of life. May believes that a self-image is valuable, that the "I" is a set of actions that constitute a meaningful world, but when this self-image defends against its spiritual longing, it becomes its own enemy. "If it only knew that in sacrificing itself--even for a moment--its true essence could be bathed in unconditional love, it would gladly offer itself."¹² As May points out, the self-image is very fearful of surrendering the will to the will of God. May says, in the interview, that a false self image is a real obstacle to love in that it filters love, and to some extent distorts love, in accordance with the individuals' programs. At worst, the false self is on an "ego trip," and passes off manipulative love as the "real thing."

¹¹ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 123.

¹² Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 125.

Although eight interviewees describe a spiritual Self, other interviewees express a desire to be more fully who they are. Growth and recognition of inhibitors are a major concern to all. Interviewees describe practices leading to maturation in the following section. What is significant to this inquiry is the possibility suggested by the interviewees' experience that within each person is an organizing center of truth and authenticity. This center of essential truth is spiritual in nature. This is a key finding of the research and one that is unexpected. For eight interviewees, the ability to love is directly related to the ability to be centered in the true essential Self. A strong correlation between self-honesty, authenticity and love is evident. According to Wise, any dishonesty will take one out of this center because the essential Self knows only truth. For real love to be present, it must issue from God, then flow into the center of truth or the essential Self, and finally flow into the worldly self. When this alignment takes place, one feels integrated, whole and complete. The information drawn from these eight interviewees on their experience of the essential Self and its relationship to the ability to love has implications for theory-building. A psycho-spiritual developmental theory of love is postulated in Chapter 9.

Relationship to Grace

The psycho-spiritual maturation process of the ability to love as described by the interviewees, evolves through human cooperation with the Divine. Grace is fundamental to the process since the Divine is the Source of perfect and unconditional love. Human beings are not capable of perfecting themselves, of

transforming themselves into persons who love unconditionally, apart from Grace.

A common characteristic shared by the interviewees is the transformation of self-control into increasing trust of the natural flow of life events, or the Will of God. This was expressed as growing in openness, trust of the Divine, surrendering the ego-self to a greater power. Some interviewees describe this as an opening of the inner heart to the infusion of Divine Love. Pure, unconditional love does not originate in the human person, but has to be transfused from the Divine Source. Some interviewees describe the open receptivity to the Divine flow as "letting God love in me." One interviewee explains the great fear of letting go. For someone who does not swim, to jump into the water is a fearful thing. In the same way to say, "I'm not the center of the universe, and if I trust myself to God, in the end everything will be much better than my doing it alone," means letting go of the control. Although floating on water is easy if a person lets go, the surrender of control to a Higher Divine Principle is often the most difficult step of growing in love. All interviewees specifically discuss their need and experience of trusting the Divine Order. Gerald May explains the difference between willfulness and willingness:

Willfulness is the setting of oneself apart from the fundamental essence of life in an attempt to master, direct, control or otherwise manipulate existence . . . willingness is a surrender of one's self separateness, an entering-into, an immersion in the deepest process of life itself . . . a saying yes to the mystery of being alive in each moment.¹³

With the relinquishing of control, many interviewees speak of a growing peace, a deepening sense of an underlying, permeating love in the created order that will

¹³ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 6.

somehow outlast all attempts to defeat it. With this peace, there is a sense that they do not have all the answers, cannot fix things, that the best they can do is to offer their love.

As conscious awareness expands, the interviewees describe an increasing sense of knowing the Divine and a growing desire to harmonize with the Divine urging. Trust involves a decision to allow themselves to be guided by Divine Love and to let Divine Love in and through the human center. One interviewee believes that as the self-centered self relinquishes control and the true Self cooperates with Grace, an alignment takes place among the worldly self, the true Self, and the Divine. This means that the desires of the worldly self, the will of the true Self and the Divine Principle of Life are congruent. The perfect alignment of these three would indicate a state of wholeness, of purity of love, of inner peace. The interviewees describe moments of harmonic union, but none reports this as a habituated state. Because, as Keating points out, the process of transformation is a restructuring of consciousness, it is most often experienced as a gradual process. According to May, there are instances in which Grace dramatically changes life¹⁴ through spontaneous experiences of unconditional love. For all of the interviewees, however, the process of growth toward the expression of Divine Love has been a life-long pilgrimage.

¹⁴ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 170.

Characteristics of Love in the Upper Reaches

In studying human love in the more mature expressions of living subjects, certain characteristics of love in the higher reaches have become apparent. Although they are discussed in previous chapters, several of these characteristics call for additional analysis.

During maturation, the boundaries of love seem to extend in increasingly wide circles from the inner center of the Self. In immature narcissistic love, the self is all that is valuable and others are seen as valuable to the degree that they serve the self. This is the infantile state of egocentricity. As love matures, the focus of attention begins to turn outward and the self begins to view others as valuable in their essential integrity. As the process of maturation takes place, more and more people are held to be lovable, valuable and precious. In early stages of maturation, one's own children are considered precious, but in later stages, all children become precious. As love matures and becomes more inclusive, earlier boundaries of clan, race, color, religion and attractiveness are transcended. People are not categorized or loved according to their merit, but are loved in their human essence. One interviewee says, "Loving is delighting in the other." As the circles widen, strangers are seen as brothers, sisters and relatives in the human family. Focusing attention outwardly toward others does not imply a disregard of the Self. As love matures, according to the interviewees, the love of both the Self and the other grows. What diminishes is an immature, narcissistic self-love and the inability to hold others precious.

In the process of maturing, love becomes more empathetic. According to Fairchild, the loving person feels another's pain and celebrates the other's joy. Judgment diminishes as one sees beyond the surface to a deeper dimension. Several interviewees speak of realizing that the hostility, anger and fear in the other person is, in reality, unresolved pain of the past, and that each person longs for forgiveness and understanding. In these loving interviewees, a compassion is expressed for others who are driven by pain into hostility, and a recognition is given to the wounded child within the hardened criminal. One interviewee speaks of a clearing of the vision, so that the essence of the other is seen beyond the outer facade; beauty is perceived where it was not apparent on the surface, such as the beauty of Eleanor Roosevelt's spirit Self. Some interviewees speak of their eyes being opened, of receiving x-ray eyes, of transcending self-domination in order to truly see the other person. One person describes the senses becoming luminous and being used by God for messages of love. The receptivity and sensitivity of the senses are heightened as perception is intensified, and one sees the Divine in all created things.

A third characteristic of love in the higher reaches is what is here called compassionate kindness. Perhaps due to growing empathy and in-depth vision, persons grow in compassionate kindness for the inner human heroine or hero who struggles with the realities of life. The human condition in which each person carries scars of woundedness is shared. Vetesse speaks of the realization that in knowing the other, one knows oneself, and in forgiving the other for weakness and imperfection, one forgives oneself.

As empathetic compassion develops, the pain of another is felt, and a loving desire to ease that pain is born. The loving-hearted person is not fearful of pain and feels no need to build inner walls of defense. Lack of callousness or hardness of heart does not suggest that the compassionate person is weak, susceptible to manipulation or soft-willed. On the contrary, the kind-hearted person has a strength born of knowing pain and transcending the pain by loving. As Marty says, "Love is the only instrument I know against suffering." The tender, compassionate heart of Mother Teresa is made strong by her loving. Brother John says, "To love is to become vulnerable and to become vulnerable is to be open to suffering. Suffering for the sake of suffering is not a good thing, but to enter into the suffering of another is an act of love."

Along with compassionate kindness, persons express concern for the suffering masses of the world, the victims of oppression, disease and poverty. Kelsey discusses the horror of slavery and social structures that crush people, and the need to put love into action to bring forth justice. As Galloway says, "You can't love people and not want to see them treated justly." Most of the interviewees express that love is the ultimate transforming power capable of enduring until suffering is defeated. In those cases such as terminal illness, love can ease the pain. Love is described as the motivating force that drives persons to find cures, to seek ways to alleviate suffering.

A fourth characteristic of love in the higher reaches is appreciative consciousness. Several interviewees speak of the desire to give thanks. One interviewee tells the story of Jesus healing ten lepers and of the one who returns to

say thank you. The others receiving the same blessing do not think to say thank you. According to six interviewees, as the ability to love matures, they experience an increasing awareness of God as the ultimate source of blessing and a deepening need to express thankful appreciation. Several interviewees see the church and the worshipping community as a place to give God thanks for the many gifts.

Analysis shows that another common characteristic among several interviewees is a sense of freedom from cultural dictates of superficial values. These interviewees feel the need to transcend the cultural values that insist that persons should be and act in certain ways. Interviewees find that as they trust and follow their inner truth, they are more authentic. As one person expresses it, "Our challenge is to live our truth, not someone else's."

The distinguishing characteristics of all the interviewees, which have been previously discussed, are the deep and abiding faith in a Divine Love underlying the created order, and an expanding consciousness of the true inner spiritual Self. The common experience is that as the true Self is more fully realized; there is an increasing sense of attunement with the Divine Principle of Life that results in a greater infusion of Divine Love.

In summary, some of the characteristics of love in the higher reaches of human possibility include: (1) Expansion of the boundaries of love to include more and more of the created order; (2) empathy and tender-hearted compassion for others; (3) appreciative consciousness; (4) desire for justice; (5) freedom to follow the inner

guide, (6) refinement of perception, (7) growth in authenticity and honesty; (8) movement from control to trust; and (9) openness to the infusion of Divine Love.

The individuals interviewed give valuable clues as to how the ability to love can be encouraged to develop and unfold in fuller form. The clues include growing in self-love, facing and integrating the shadow self, and learning to trust the inner Self and the Divine.

The transcripts are rich with material that is not reported here due to limitations of space. Love is such an all-inclusive subject that to cover adequately its many aspects would require volumes. Subjects such as the relationship between love and sexuality, love and death, the meaning of evil in a loving creation, are left for discussion at a later time. Many of these subjects are discussed in the interviews. The focus of this study, however, has been to determine the possibility of human love to mature, the relationship of the maturation of human love to Divine Love, the characteristics of more fully developed human love, and the practices which nurture love's maturation. The challenge has been to remain aimed at the stated target.

Chapter 9

A Psycho-Spiritual Developmental Theory of Love

Introduction

This chapter is a theoretical presentation. The theory proposed here is the result of sifting through the research data to find clues to the human process of maturing in love, and then fitting these clues into some meaningful patterns, like fitting pieces of a puzzle together. As stated in Chapter 4, this is an exploratory study for the purpose of discovering new insights into the subject in order that a more definitive hypothesis can be formulated for further research. The major emphasis is on the discovery of new insights, not on proving a particular hypothesis. The research data provides insights that creatively stimulate the process of hypothesizing. This proposed theory is preliminary and requires further research for substantiation. Although the interviews are in-depth interviews, the sampling is small.

The theoretical proposition is based on material from eight of the interviewees who describe a sense of a spiritual Center or authentic Self. This information was unexpected and spontaneously given in answer to the question of how one grows in love. Other interviewees may have had similar experiences, but they did not answer in the same way. Since the study was not designed to elicit subjective material

regarding the experience of a true authentic Self, the number of interviewees who indicated such experience seems noteworthy and valuable. The information is also valuable because, as Jung says, "The shadow, the syzygy [anima, animus] and the Self are psychic factors of which an adequate picture can be formed only on the basis of a fairly thorough experience of them."¹ These persons offer a picture of inner psychic phenomena. In addition, this information is in accordance with theories proposed by others such as Jung and Assagioli whose theories are discussed in this chapter.

The researcher points out that all of the interviewees in this study have a spiritual orientation to life. Some are not associated with organized religions, but none are disbelieving of a spiritual or immaterial dimension of reality. The results of the study cannot apply to those who are atheistic or non-spiritual in their beliefs and orientation to life. Further study needs to be done in order to learn how such persons grow into love in the upper reaches.

Another factor to note is that the life experience of the analyst inevitably influences the conclusions. The analyst in this case has had personal experience in interior searching which includes: (1) twenty years of daily meditation; (2) exploration of interior states of consciousness as described by Bloomfield, Vettese, Wise and others; (3) experiences of the state of silence described by the Steeres, Keating and Kelsey; and (4) in-depth psychoanalysis. This background has been helpful in studying the research material and in integrating the psychological and

¹ Jung, Aion, 33.

spiritual dimensions of human experience. However, such experience undoubtedly influences the analysis of the data.

This preliminary theory is formulated as a result of investigative analysis and in-depth questioning of the material. The task of analysis is to be alert to the material of importance hidden within the vast research transcripts. One interviewee in one sentence can open the investigation into a completely new area. The analyst has endeavored to maintain an objective approach. However, due to human frailty and the inference of grounded theory that the analyst be in a thinking posture, the theory can be said to be a composite of literary study, interviewee experience, analyst experience and analytic investigation.

The analyst attempts to keep clear for the reader what material comes directly from the research data and literary review, and what is the independent thinking of the analyst. Unless specifically noted otherwise, the reader can assume the material comes directly from the research.

In the analysis of the reports of these nineteen interviewees, a tentative developmental theory of the maturation of love evolves from the commonalities of experience. The theory elicited by the research is: As persons mature in their ability to love, they often experience a growing awareness of a spiritual Self sometimes understood to be the true authentic Self, which acts as a receptor and transmitter of Divine Love, and which can be inhibited in this process by negative psychological programs called psychic toxins. The argument for this theory is based on the living experience and insights of the interviewees. It is formulated as the result of

investigative analysis, in-depth questioning of the material and thoughtful analysis of the data.

The apparent dichotomy that seems to exist in discussing a true Self, and a self that operates in the material world of daily life, does not exist in actuality. The self which is consciously acting and moving in the world of daily life is an integral part of the totality of the true Self, but it is only a part. The true Self is described here as an operating center which is divine in nature and which has the potentiality for expressing Divine Love. This Center is a Center of truth, the integrity of the individual. The maturation of love is a process of expanding consciousness in which the self-part, acting in the world, becomes increasingly conscious of its essential core truth and increasingly able to express that truth. Assagioli points to a "clear distinction between the empirical ego and the nominal or real Self. This Self is above and unaffected by the flow of the mind-stream or by bodily condition, and the personal conscious self should be considered merely as its reflection, its projection in the field of personality."²

The patterns of interviewee experience that have been studied reveal that primary growth toward love in the upper reaches centers around increasing authenticity through the gradual elimination of psychic toxins. Psychic toxins include fallible perceptions, false material values, insecurities, low self-esteem, unexpressed angers, guilt, fear, shame and so forth. There is a strong relationship between psychological and spiritual processes, which are based on psychological self-honesty

² Robert Assagioli, Psychosynthesis (New York: Penguin, 1976), 19.

and on authenticity. Growing in authenticity through self-understanding follows the pattern of human individuation and growth toward wholeness suggested by Jung.³ Jung, in his investigation, has found evidence of what he calls the archetypal wholeness self. He writes that the process of individuation, the movement toward wholeness, involves the unveiling of the persona (the mask of social roles), the confronting of the shadow (the rejected aspect of personality), integrating the inner animus (masculine) and anima (feminine) of the sexual structure, and developing the self, a divine spark of God.⁴ Other investigators concerned with human possibilities, such as Maslow, Goldstein, Frankl, Assagioli and Sorokin, have found, in the course of their studies of human nature, evidence of a higher center from which creativity, intuition and altruism issue. Robert Assagioli, a psychiatrist and colleague of Freud, Jung and Maslow, distinguishes between the little self or ego and that Self which he calls the Fount, the Center, the deeper Being, the apex of ourselves.⁵

This study further validates their work and substantiates such a center, calling it diversely the Divine Center, the core of the human person, the inner opening to universal Divinity, the center of the spiritual Self, the receptor of Divine Love, the purpose of which is to receive and to radiate Divine Love.

The theory proposed here builds upon the Jungian developmental model of individuation and the Loevinger theory of ego development, with this important

³ Jung, Aion, 223.

⁴ Jung, Aion, 3-36.

⁵ Assagioli, Psychosynthesis 38.

difference. Jung believes that the goal of individuation is wholeness, saying, "Unity and totality stand at the highest point on the scale of objective values."⁶ Jung describes the state of wholeness as the state in which the human functions of feeling, sensing, thinking, intuiting are fully developed and operating in integrated balance from the center of consciousness, called the self. Jung discusses the developmental process toward wholeness as an integration of unconscious elements into consciousness in which the ego, a center of consciousness, gradually yields its dominating position to the "new totality of the self . . . conscious wholeness consists of a successful union of ego and self, so that both preserve their intrinsic qualities."⁷ Jung means by ego a cohesive force for all the multifarious psychological processes and their interplay. The ego is a "fluctuating composition" but does not comprise the total self.⁸

The theory proposed here holds that the goal of individuation and all evolution is for the full expression of Divine Love, and that the state of unity or wholeness is the state of human love expressing more purely Divine Love. The researcher believes that the goal of creation has to be greater than wholeness in the sense of individualized full-functioning. Self-knowledge and self-realization, as advocated by many religions, have a meaningful value when seen as attributive to the

⁶ Jung, Aion, 31.

⁷ Jung, The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche, 224-25.

⁸ Jung, The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche, 323-25.

ability to love. Many of the interviewees in this study discuss coming to a place in their lives in which they see love as the purpose of life.

The theoretical propositions presented here are based upon the scientific paradigm discussed earlier, which suggests that all of creation is: (1) in continual flux; (2) in the process of becoming; and (3) related and interconnected. This theory is also based upon Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's evolutionary theory of love, discussed in Chapter 2, that expanded consciousness and increasing unconditional love are the intended thrust of human evolution. Teilhard tells us that evolution is not a haphazard process in a mindless creation. Evolution is the purposeful life force urging toward expanding conscious loving. Love is the creative energy and cosmic integrating power which continually seeks greater, richer, expanded expressions of love. All values such as justice, wisdom, truth and beauty must be grounded in love or they cannot express their true value.⁹ This love is validated and described by the interviewees as the energy of all creation. This love, according to the interviewees, is the breath (spiritus, Greek) of creation that yearns to express itself in an infinite array of forms such as sea anemone, blooming rose, chapel bells, human tenderness.

This theory is further based upon the work of Freud and others discussed in Chapter 3, that love can be inhibited by negative psychological experiences and toxins. The goal of psychological therapy is to free the individual of psychological toxins and restrictive patterns in order that he or she can grow toward states of wholeness described by Maslow, Rogers and Fromm in the earlier section. The

⁹ Teilhard de Chardin, Phenomenon of Man, 257-68.

theoretical propositions presented here maintain that as an individual is gradually freed of inhibitors, he or she is increasingly able to express Divine Love in daily life.

Important to the theoretical propositions is the identification of common stages of the human psychological and spiritual journey toward wholeness, the state in which unconditional love is most fully expressed. The journey is well attested to by a number of the interviewees. The process includes healing woundedness, addressing psychological inhibitors that block full functioning, and a process of unfolding what some interviewees describe as the essential truth of the Self.

Stages of Psycho-spiritual Development

Data from the research indicates that the human person has not only physical/mental dimensions, but also psychological and spiritual dimensions. Nesbitt suggests that different laws govern each dimension of reality; physical laws order the physical layer, psychological the psychological dimension and spiritual laws order the spiritual dimension. Nesbitt discusses her experience that psychological toxins can take years to heal through the psychological laws of psycho-therapy, but can be healed in a moment through spiritual laws of miracle.

One metaphor that can represent what the interviewees are describing is a hologram, which is discussed in Chapter 2. Within each segment of a hologram is found the whole hologram. The whole of a human person is contained within each part. This means that each cell has physical, intellectual, feeling and spiritual

dimensions. Separating the constellation of a person into mind, body, feeling and spirit is inaccurate. The true Self, what De Tiger calls the soul-Self, is located at the core of that human constellation. The soul-Self or true Self is, according to Keating, like a receiving center that receives and then transmits Divine Love. Ideally the center will be clear of impurities and will transmit Divine Love in its purity. However, in most human cases, inhibitors block the flow of Divine Love or taint its purity.

Eight of the interviewees describe the outer dimension of personhood that is shown to the world as only the outer layer of the Self. The totality of the Self includes not only conscious and unconscious psychic dimensions, but at its center has a divinity, a truth, which can open to the Transcendent Divine of Love. As pointed out in previous chapters, this center is referred to by interviewees as the true Self, the Christed Self, the Godness center and so forth. Roberto Assagioli says, "There have been many individuals who have achieved, more or less temporarily, a conscious realization of the Self that for them has the same degree of certainty as is experienced by an explorer who has entered a previously unknown region."¹⁰

Assagioli goes on to say that at the present stage of psychological investigation, little is definitely known about the Self. For the purposes of this theory, the Self, which is a center of divinity, is called the true Self to differentiate it from the ego. The ego is a center of consciousness that has awareness of the empirical world and limited awareness of inner psychic phenomena. The ego acts as agent in the world

¹⁰ Assagioli, Psychosynthesis, 19.

for the true Self, and is part of the totality of personhood, but is not the totality. Assagioli suggests that the human task is to bring this true Self more and more into personal consciousness.¹¹ The theory proposes here is that unconditional love is received from the Divine by the true Self and transmitted into daily life. If the routes through the interior levels of the psyche are impeded by psychic toxins, then expression of unconditional love into daily life is diminished. The more the ego expresses the truth and authenticity of the divine center, the more the ego expresses love in the upper reaches. An important insight of this research is the relationship these eight interviewees describe between the true Self and the ability to express love in the upper reaches. The interviewees who discuss this are very clear about the relationship and the necessity of growing in authentic expression of the true Self in order to love in wholeness.

All nineteen of the interviewees believe that unconditional love does not originate within the individual, but is received from a Divine Source. What the experience of the eight interviewees suggests is that the divine center or true Self receives unconditional love from the Divine.

The process toward love in the upper reaches is a growth process involving two primary developments: the unfoldment of the true Self, and the open human receptivity to Divine Love. May suggests that this last requires a movement from willfulness to willingness.¹² Many of the interviewees discuss or describe this

¹¹ Assagioli, Psychosynthesis, 24.

¹² Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 1-22.

movement toward willingness as a surrender, an entrusting of the Self to the Divine, a letting go of control. Wise suggests, however, that this Divine Love is a basic element of creation, and growing in love is not growing in the ability to receive Divine Love, but is awakening to what is already present. Composite interviewee material suggests that the process of maturation in love can be understood as a process of gradual unfoldment of the true Self through which Divine Love radiates with increasing fullness.

The natural evolutionary urge of life is toward the expanding conscious awareness of full expression of the true Self. The word conscious is helpful to distinguish between the stages of maturation. A newborn baby may in its innocence be the integrated wholeness of mind, body, feeling and spirit, and yet the baby's conscious awareness is limited by its early stage of maturation. The evolutionary theory of Pierre Teilhard, taken with the experiential material of the interviewees, indicates a relationship between expanding conscious awareness, increasing expression of the authentic true Self and the ability to love in the upper reaches. The process of growth, expressed by all the interviewees, is a life-long epigenetic process, which at each successive stage is the integrated composite of all the previous stages. As Wise points out, we drop nothing, it must all be integrated.

The Early Stage

The difficulty in proposing a developmental theory is that too often the system indicates that later stages of development are more valuable than earlier stages. This

cannot be the case. Each stage has its potential for full maturation for that stage and each stage has limitations. Each succeeding stage offers new possibilities as abilities become expanded and strengthened. The infant is limited by immature faculties and yet, within these limitations imposed by nature, able to be fully infant. The study of the earliest stages of infancy suggests that the universe of the infant is initially within itself, gradually extending out to include the mother figure, then others. Love, in this stage for the infant, is a natural response to the reception of love and care. Love arises spontaneously from the integrated wholeness of mind, body, feelings, spirit that the infant is.

The degree of love in this stage might be reflected in the ability to be fully responsive and natural without inhibitors. Marty, May and Kelsey discuss the infant in terms of its being the center of its universe. Gradually, the infant matures in the faculties of sight, hearing, consciousness, and within weeks will express the first signs of giving love through a smile or gestures of pleasure. The infant is learning to trust through the mother's response to the infant's expressions of love, thus communicating that this love is appreciated, validated and received. Erikson describes this stage of building trust as elemental to the life of the individual.¹³ The theory presented here is that in learning to trust, to receive and give love, the infant is learning the dynamics of love in the upper reaches. In a loving, trustful environment, the infant can be observed as open, initiating and receiving love through voice, touch, physical expression. The suggestion here is that openness, naturalness, spontaneity and trust

¹³ Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle, 57-67.

characterize the true authentic Self throughout life, and are integral to love in the upper reaches regardless of stage.

Unfortunately, no environment is permanently ideal. At some point, inhibitors to natural behavior are introduced into the infant's life. The inhibitors to naturalness and the spontaneous expression of love come in the form of rejection, if not from immediate family, then in time from peers. One can observe in very young children the effects of rejection as the child begins to withdraw, to become self-conscious, to monitor behavior. The present researcher is exploring the possibility that the self that begins to function in the empirical world gradually distances from the true Self. Depending on the degrees of rejection and pain, the distance for some is greater than for others.

The psycho-spiritual developmental theory proposed here draws on the theories of Freud, Jung and Loewinger, holding that the ego is a center of consciousness that comes into being in infancy for the purpose of governing the personality and mediating the demands of the inner self with the environmental demands. In discussing the relationship of the ego and the self, Jung understands the ego as the center of the field of consciousness of the empirical personality. It operates in both the field of the conscious and the unconscious, but is not the center of the total personality. The center of the personality is what Jung calls the self, a wholeness, or the God-image, symbolized by the Christ.¹⁴ The self or total personality embodies the shadow or dark side of the personality as well as the anima

¹⁴ Jung, Aion, 36.

and animus. Becoming conscious of the shadow and the anima and animus is essential for any kind of self-knowledge.

Freud is helpful in identifying the ego as an active mediator between the inner and outer dimensions of reality, but he limits his thinking by his refusal to accept a spiritual dimension of human experience. By his denial of the spiritual human dimension of life, he cannot perceive beyond the unconscious realm to the central core of the human being. He is left thinking that the unconscious, with its primal instincts, repressions and drives, is the center of the human person, and that the energy that activates this being is sexual. Jung's belief that there is a spiritual reality within a collective unconscious leads to his separation from Freud.

Loevinger's ego developmental theory suggests that the ego grows through developmental stages beginning with the impulsive stage, which is exploitive and aggressive, into the conformist stage characterized by appearances and superficial niceness, and then into more self-aware and conscientious stages in which the ego gradually attains to self-respect, autonomy. At the highest level of ego development there is an integration and reconciliation of inner conflicts and a cherishing of autonomy.¹⁵

The theory proposed here agrees with Jung's theory that the ego is not the totality of the self; what is proposed here is that the spiritual Self is the true center of human beingness. The ego's primary role is to mediate internal and external conditions in order to facilitate the full expression of the true Self. As the ego

¹⁵ Jane Loevinger, Ego Development (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976).

mediates more expression of the true Self, it aligns itself more concurrently with the true Self. The ego and the true Self are intended to operate in mutuality. If the ego distances from the true Self, and becomes more focused on the material dimension of reality, the authentic life of the individual will be diminished. If the center of authority is in the true Self and the ego is fulfilling its intended function, the development will be toward authenticity and love in the upper reaches.

The present researcher proposes that the purpose of the ego is to provide a material form, a persona or personality, that embodies the expression of the true spiritual Self in the material world. In pathological, neurotic or immature development, the ego often turns its focus to the outer world and distances from the true Self. In time the worldly persona is less and less a reflection of the true Self. In suggesting the strong relationship between authenticity and unconditional love, this theory indicates that the unhealthy or immature ego is incapable of love in the upper reaches to the degree it is unhealthy or immature. In threatening situations, the unhealthy ego builds defenses that not only separate the ego from threatening experiences, but also separate it from the true Self. The greater the threats from the outer world, the more invulnerable and rigid are the walls of inner protection and defense built by the ego. Psychic toxins limit the possibilities of the healthy ego. Dishonesty creeps in when feelings of rage, anger and denial are repressed and glossed over with deceptive friendliness or nonchalant pretense or when fear is masked by exaggerated power or fraudulent bravery, inferiority by superiority. To the degree the unhealthy ego distances from the true Self, which has an absolute

integrity and cannot deal in untruth and deception, authentic being and unconditional love are not possible. If growth is to take place, according to Kelsey, the eventual conflict will be between what he calls the false self and the true spiritual Self.

Some fortunate individuals have from their beginning a nurturing environment, in which case the need for a strong ego and false self-image is much less. In this event the true Self more actively contributes to the formation of the worldly self, which is then more authentic, natural and real.

For reasons not fully understood, some persons do not separate the worldly and spiritual selves, even when afflicted with severe abuse and deprivation. The spiritual center remains the center of the human complex. This is the case with two interviewees. However, all persons who continue to grow in love must, at some point, begin the task of dismantling dishonesty in the worldly self and expressing more fully the honest authentic Self.

Love in the early stage of psycho-spiritual development is limited by the degree of egocentricity. When all interest and concern revolves around the self, love of another is not possible. Others are seen as valuable only as they support and enhance the ego. The intrinsic value of another is neither seen nor appreciated. In egocentricity a pretense of love can be directed toward others, but the purpose of the pretense is ego-enhancement. Divine Love, radiating through the divine human Center, is distorted and contaminated by this presence of psychic toxins and ego defenses. The quality of love is in direct relationship to the authentic expression emanating from the true spiritual Self.

Psycho-spiritual development is neither chronological nor guaranteed. A person can reach the age of ninety arrested at the first stage of ego separation from the spiritual Self, while a young child may reflect a relative freedom from psychic toxins and be much more expressive of the authentic Self.

Stage II--Centering in the True Self

In the second phase of psycho-spiritual development, an awakening of consciousness takes place in which outer material life is no longer perceived as the only reality, and centering in the true Self is initiated. In this theory, the centering in the authentic Self begins the process of spiritual life in which the Self is given Divine assistance in the revelatory process of truth seeking.

Chronological age is not an indication of readiness for the stage of centering. Some children at an early age tend toward authenticity and honest expression of Self-hood, while many elderly persons do not. Teenagers particularly are thrown into identity crises as they attempt to discover who they are, and by whose criteria they will guide their lives. Snyder says, "that being the truth you were meant to be is a life-long enterprise The most fundamental kind of truth is not a statement which corresponds to fact but *a person who is an integrity*."¹⁶ Wise holds that being truth is the fullest expression of love. This postulate might be stated, "To be integrity is to love in the upper reaches."

¹⁶ Snyder, 66.

Keating describes this phase of the psycho-spiritual journey as a journey in self-knowledge, a time of learning the influence of the false self. Part of the process is to discover not only psychic toxins (Keating's word), and the false self, but also to discover the true Self. By seeking increasing self-honesty the afflictive patterns and psycho-toxins that inhibit full authentic expression are brought to consciousness. For Keating, Divine psycho-therapy means the inner light that God gives to the dark side of our personalities. In Keating's view, only Divine love can bring to light the depths of psyche or soul that are beyond human consciousness and reveal the restrictions of inauthenticity. Self-healing reaches an impasse at the point where inhibiting patterns are hidden deep within and cannot be brought to consciousness by human willing. Keating says that in cooperation with Divine Therapy, the deep and wounded feelings of the unconscious are gradually made conscious. According to Vettese, one begins to understand the woundedness that has caused protective defense mechanisms to be activated. Hidden and life-diminishing angers are revealed as reactions to violations to the true Self. Lust and perversions are revealed as the reactive patterns of an elaborate ego-defense system. Revelation, leading to self knowledge and self-honesty, is a process that can take many years, but is the pathway to spiritual freedom and mature love, according to this theory.

The theoretical proposition offered here is that self-knowledge apart from the Divine will not eventuate in human love in the upper reaches. Love in the upper reaches evolves through human cooperation with Grace. As stated earlier, love in the upper reaches is a growth process involving two primary developments, the

unfoldment of the true Self and the human receptivity of Divine Love. As the authentic Self is more fully expressed, love becomes more pure.

Stage III--Expansion of the True Self

If the delineation of human maturation could accurately be set apart into separate distinct stages, Stage III would be the stage of enlarging the capacity of the true Self to love in increasingly full measure. However, human growth does not happen in this way. Maturation is a simultaneous process of eliminating inhibitions that restrict freedom and enlarging or expanding the capacity for expression. Maturation is never a straight line. There are periods of regression, plateaus and stagnation, as well as growth. By the gradual acceptance and integration of the dark side of the psyche, growth and maturation take place and the center of gravity moves from the worldly self to the true Self. Assagioli defines psychosynthesis as the process of reconstruction of the personality around the unifying center of the true Self.¹⁷

According to several interviewees, the ability to love is strengthened by practice. Marty says love grows by Grace and by practice. The present researcher understands that the practice, which leads to growth in the ability to love, is the practice of authenticity and truth, as described by Snyder, Wise, De Tiger, Kelsey, Fairchild and Vettese. In the process of honest self-appraisal, the true Self is more transparently expressed. Love that is radiated is more purely endowed with Divine

¹⁷ Assagioli, Psychosynthesis, 21.

Love and therefore more unconditional and perfected. Polonius' admonition to Laertes in Hamlet is still timely: "To thine own self be true." The suggestion here is that the self referred to by Polonius is the true Self.

Wholeness is a state in which the true Self is expressed in daily life. The quality of human love is in relationship to the psychic inhibitors which distort the purity of the inflow of Divine Love. Although all love originates, according to the interviewees, in the Divine, it is received and filtered through an imperfect human complex. The third stage of the maturation of love entails the increasing full ability of the true Self to express Divine Love.

This process of restructuring consciousness results in a new state of being and consciousness, Stage III, in which love is qualitatively different. Various eastern religions have named this state Enlightenment, Realization of the Universal Self or God Consciousness. Wesley identifies this as a more nearly perfected state in which Divine Love is expressed. In this stage, the capacity is both strengthened and enlarged, so that the person is more able to act as a receptor and transmitter of Divine Love. Divine Love flows in and through the core of the Self into manifest reality. Mother Teresa is a living example of a human person who has grown on the spiritual level and has become increasingly an expression of Divine Love. Many of the interviewees speak of growing stronger in the ability to love in the process of loving. The more one loves, the more one is able to love.

In the third stage of development, the center of authority is situated in the true spiritual Self. As the maturation takes place within this stage, there is a

flowering of the Self in which the Divine is more purely revealed. Love in the upper reaches of human possibility is expressed by the interviewees as increasingly universal, unconditional, compassionate, transforming the ordinary into miracle. Love in this full form sees reality in a particular way, giving to every aspect of life a deep and reverent value (Marty and Keating). The wisdom of love, flowing from the Divine, seeks justice and mercy for all who suffer and for all wrongs against the Divine Principle of Life (Galloway and Kelsey). Such love is in continual thankful appreciation for the wonder and gift of life, for the beauty and infinite variety of the created order. In this love, persons experience an intensification of life, awareness of the fragility which makes each moment holy. Life is lived as a sacrament as love deepens the communion with all of life's creations. Miracles happen, for the Law of Love can transcend the laws of cause and effect (Nesbitt). The life experience of the interviewees indicates that as human persons mature, they gradually are freed from inner psychic inhibitors and outer restrictive material and cultural values. They become more universal in their understanding of reality; their interest in and care of others is more inclusive; superficial barriers of race and nationality are dissolved. For the interviewees in this study, the limiting values of the material world are transcended and the desire for values of beauty, justice and harmony grows. The life task as they describe it is to live from their Center of Truth so that their lives are authentic and whole, and their love is an expression of their deepest inner truth. To love becomes their reason for living.

CHAPTER 10

Love and Religious Education

Brief Review of Assumptions and Purpose

This dissertation journey began with an observation and a question: The observation is that the world suffers the tragedy of love deprivation; the question is, with all the accumulated wisdom of the past, the extraordinary breadth of human intelligence and inquiry, the plight of a wounded, suffering world, why does humankind not more seriously pursue the goal of love? Why do human persons not grow more loving, because they cannot or because they do not know how? What can one draw from the literature and the interviews regarding the ability to grow in love?

The past teaches that materialistic exploration and material abundance do not satisfy the hunger of the heart. The sad plight of the world suggests that the material dimension of reality holds limited answers to living problems. In a world faced with overwhelming suffering and stymied by failure to find solutions, has humankind seriously asked the question of how to build a more loving world? In the past, the secular sciences and materialistic philosophies have denied or ignored the divine power of love. Yet, the power of love will one day be recognized as a power far greater than atomic power. To repeat a quote of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "When

humankind harnesses for God the energies of love, humankind for the second time in history will have discovered fire."¹ If Gerald May is right, as he says in his interview, that human persons are created in love, by love and for love, then it naturally follows that the highest human purpose is to be love, to reach for that state where one loves because it is one's nature to love.

As stated in Chapters 2 and 8, this dissertation project is based on the assumptions: (1) that the life process is toward creative transformation and healthy maturation; (2) that the innate urge for human growth is toward full expression of unconditional love; and (3) that each stage of healthy maturation provides increasing possibilities for love; and (4) that as love becomes the living principle, the individual is increasingly in reciprocal harmonious relationship with nature, other persons, the Self and the Divine Principle of Life. However, it is never guaranteed that creation is moving in a healthy evolutionary direction toward love. Healthy maturation can be frustrated and inhibited by life-diminishing and damaging forces. Maslow and others hold that the frustration of the life-enhancing creative urge leads to anger, rage, hate and violence. Life-diminishing, cancerous growth is the result of disorder, disharmony, frustration of the natural process.²

In this study, the assumption of the evolutionary process toward life-enhancement and love does not hold that life and death are held in eternal struggle. The understanding here is that death is a natural process which signals the end of

¹ Teilhard de Chardin, On Love and Happiness, 16.

² Maslow, The Farther Reaches of Human Nature, 25-40.

one phase and the beginning of another. With such a view, each moment has both a birth and a death. The real life struggle is not with death, but with forces which would strangle and inhibit the natural process of life to express love.

This research study focuses on the interior states of subjective experience as persons experience their ability to love. This focus on the inner dimensions does not imply that the outer states of human experience, how persons live in their world, is not of equal value and importance. The ideal state of human life is the expression of authentic love in the world. In this state, outer life is an increasing expression of inward life. All actions in the outer world originate from an inner purity, clarity and harmony that is authentically loving without dishonesty, pretense and hypocrisy. Unless the psychological inhibitions and toxins are gradually removed, through honest self-confrontation and through Grace, the love that is expressed into the world will lack purity and authenticity. A person's actions in the world reflect the inner state of maturity. As a person matures toward the upper reaches, his or her action becomes increasingly affirming on all levels of life. A person who is true to his or her inner integrity will find the vocation that best expresses his or her natural talents and gifts. A painter will paint because his or her nature is to paint, a composer will compose, a shoe salesman will fit shoes with the desire of providing others the best fit, the most comfortable shoes. Work performed in love with the purpose of love has a different quality. Kelsey writes books, Nesbitt creates pottery, Bloomfield counsels, De Tiger nurtures the spiritual life of others and so on. Work becomes a vehicle for the expression of love. In the world this balance between inner growth

and outer expression is critical to fullness of life for both the individual and the society.

The purpose of this research study has been to gain some insight into the eternal mystery of love, with the recognition that the mystery is far greater than one's capacity to understand, but with the hope that each ray of light will further illumine human knowledge. The work has attempted to address such issues as: (1) Can human beings grow in their ability to love? (2) What are the factors which contribute to the growth of love? (3) What are the developmental stages in the maturation of love? (4) What are the characteristics of love in the higher reaches of human possibility?

The purpose of this concluding chapter is to give final voice to the nineteen persons who have shared their life experience, to discuss their practices for maturing in love and to offer to education insights from the research that can be used for assisting persons to grow in their ability to love. Life experience is particularly meaningful because every person can relate to others who grapple with the hard issues of real life. De Tiger remarked, "Contact with living struggling human persons can give insights which not a single library on earth can give." What significant clues and insights have these persons offered to light the evolutionary journey of love?

Insights Offered to Education

The results of this study, which indicate that persons can and do grow in their ability to love, has important ramifications for education in general and religious education in particular. Valuable information for education is that: (1) persons grow in the ability to love others as they learn to love and forgive themselves; (2) the maturation of love is closely correlated to the growing authenticity of the Self; (3) authenticity and integrity can be enhanced by self-knowledge; and (4) the maturation of love is an on-going life process with ever-increasing possibilities.

Valuable insight for religious education also derives from the interviewees: (1) love as it matures into its highest states is the result of spiritual transformation; (2) the goal of spiritual life is the expression of Divine Love through the true Self; (3) love is an act of receiving as well as giving; (4) suffering can lead to empathic compassion for others; and (5) maturation into the upper reaches is often experienced as cooperation between the individual self and the Divine Principle of Life.

What then does this study have to say to persons who do not have an active and conscious relationship to the Divine Order of Life? Are the atheists, non-believers, non-religious able to mature in love in the upper reaches? If the conclusion of this study is that the process of maturation is often experienced as cooperation with the Divine Principle of Life, what can be said of the disbelievers? One explanation is that persons can experience either conscious or unconscious

maturation of love. Some persons naturally and spontaneously cooperate with Grace, but this is an unconscious act. Several interviewees discuss the difference between conscious and unconscious spirituality. In conscious spirituality, the person consciously decides to surrender self-will, to entrust the human process to God. In unconscious spirituality, the person is in natural but unconscious harmony with the Divine Principle. Marty says, "There are people who do not know they are serving God, but in giving love, they are serving God." Slavik further confirms this saying, "My mother is an extremely loving person, but she doesn't think about God, her concern is people."

The conjecture here is that persons can mature in love without conscious awareness of cooperating with Grace, but the process of maturing into the upper reaches requires some form of cooperation with Grace. Whether spiritual development is conscious or unconscious, the more loving a person is, the more naturally attuned he/she is to the Divine in life. Many of the interviewees, Fairchild, Marty, Steere, May, Kelsey, Keating, Cobb and Snyder, are themselves religious educators. All believe that maturation in love involves open receptivity to Grace.

A future research project might investigate how love grows and matures in persons and societies that do not enjoy the luxury of self-examination and conscious spirituality. Many descriptions have been given of instances among the poorest of the poor in which there is sacrificial giving involving the sharing of a morsel of food. Perhaps those who suffer the deepest wounds have the greatest empathy for the pain of others. The common experience of the interviewees in this study is that suffering

can lead to new depths of understanding, compassion and wisdom. Suffering can also lead to bitterness, alienation and destructive behavior. What are the factors that enable a person to integrate the pain of deep suffering to become a more loving person?

Another valuable research project could investigate the effects of cruel and repressive social conditions on the maturation of love. What has been pointed to in the study is the possibility for human beings to mature into full expressions of love. This study assumes that a supportive environment enhances the possibilities, yet also assumes that within the most repressive and debilitating society, people loving in the higher reaches will be found. Those in this study who were abused as children, have grown in love despite their painful experiences. Further research is needed in order to learn what societal and cultural factors contribute to love in the upper reaches.

Implications for Education

The interviews and the experience of the analyst support the thesis that self-knowledge and self-love are critical to the maturation of love. Questions are raised, however, as to the extent that self-analysis can probe the hidden depths of the unconscious and the spiritual dimensions of the human psyche. Several interviewees speak of a sense of mystery or transcendence in their growing awareness. As Keating suggests: the Divine Therapist brings to conscious awareness the hidden depths. The material presented here supports the words of Thomas Merton,

No man can cure his own heart and deliver his own conscience from the incubus of evil merely by self-analysis and by catharsis, or merely by opening his heart to a brother . . . nor by self-purification, good works, the elimination of sensual desires, the cleansing of concepts, the emptying of the intellect and will, the liberation from cravings. On the contrary, his very tendency to understand the meaning of liberation in such terms may ultimately make liberation impossible. The mercy of God must wipe out the writing that is graven in his own consciousness and deep beneath it in the unconscious depths of his very existence.³

Many persons have experienced growth, change and healing through psychological theories and techniques. However, the findings in this research indicate that self-analysis, no matter how penetrating, may not be able to cure the human woundedness that lies hidden deep within the human psyche. The deeper levels of the psyche are within the mystery of spiritual experience.

Humanistic psychologists have focused on self-realization through self-knowledge, but by their failure to plumb the depths of the spiritual dimension of the human psyche, they suggest that persons can actualize their fullest potential through their own effort and will. Although such attempts can yield moments of expansive, rich life, the more full state of abundant life is illusive. As May attests, "In my work as a psychiatrist, I was frustrated by the realization that though I could help people with their interpersonal and intrapsychic problems, there was still a longing within them for something deeper."⁴ Such language is used by several of the interviewees.

³ Thomas Merton, Love and Living (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Janovich, 1985), 206-08.

⁴ Gerald G. May, Pilgrimage Home: The Conduct of Contemplative Practice in Groups (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 7.

The living experience of millions of human persons indicates the reality of a spiritual dimension, and the need for integrating material and spiritual reality. One interviewee speaks of the human challenge to spiritualize the material world. Let the reader note that using terminology such as material and spiritual dimensions is for the purpose of communication. The reality implied in this language is that all matter has a spiritual dimension. Human beings are limited by their consciousness in realizing the full spiritual dimension of the material reality. Such a view of reality suggests that without acceptance of the need to realize the incarnate spiritual dimension of reality, our human endeavors will continue to produce degrees of disorder.

What does the foregoing mean to education? First, the recognition of the spiritual dimension of reality to the maturation of human love seems of critical importance in order that education can assist persons in this maturation process. If the hypothesis is substantiated by further research, that growth into the higher reaches of love is in cooperation with the Divine Principle of Life, then this needs to be incorporated into educational methodologies.

Secular education, governed by laws separating church and state, is not permitted to teach the spiritual dimensions of reality. However, some encouraging signs indicate that secular education is recognizing the relationship between inner psychological health and outer educated action. According to New York City Teacher of the Year John Taylor Gatto, the goals of education should include the

"teaching of self-knowledge, the only basis of true knowledge."⁵ California State Assemblyman John Vasconcellos has led a task force to test-study programs for increasing self-esteem in the public schools.⁶ These are hopeful signs that secular educators are increasingly aware of the importance of self-esteem, and self-knowledge in the maturation process.

Public education has not included love as a subject on its agenda. Ten years ago Leo Buscaglia's class on love was one of the first ever offered on a State University campus. Because this is the case, religious education is the one branch of education which has explicitly taught love and also the relationship of love to the spiritual dimension of reality. Many possibilities exist for religious education: (1) religious educators can inspire persons to the highest human possibilities, and help them understand deep inner longings for unconditional love, for living authentic life, for belonging; (2) they can draw on the knowledge of psychology and can assist persons to understand the structure of interior consciousness, expand awareness, integrate inhibiting psychic toxins, and seek healing through appropriate guilt and grief; (3) they can assist persons to balance their lives between spiritual practices of prayer and meditation with meaningful action; (4) they can encourage the replacement of false values in order to enhance and enrich life on every level; (5) they can assist spiritual growth through nurturing authentic life and cooperation with

⁵ John Taylor Gatto, "Self-knowledge, True Education," Acceptance Speech, Christian Science Monitor, 10 Sept. 1990: 16.

⁶ The work of the task force on self-esteem was published in January, 1990.

the Divine Principle of Life; and (6) they can inspire persons with a vision of possibilities through teaching the characteristics of love in the upper reaches.

Suggested Methods for Growing in Love

"One grows in love through practice and through Grace."

Martin Marty (interview)

Maturation of Love through Practice

Interviewees overwhelmingly expressed that persons can assist the maturation of love through practice. One person uses the analogy of a muscle: the more it is exercised, the stronger it becomes. Simultaneously, the stronger it becomes the greater its ability to be used. The primary practice, from interviewee experience, is the practice of both inner and outer honesty. One does not try to be compassionate when one does not feel compassionate. Such behavior is considered dishonest and will increase dishonesty. As Wise says, trying to act loving when it is not felt reiterates the lie, duplicates the phony game, is behavior without presence, which is worse than not loving at all.

Practice for the interviewees means the practice of attunement with the higher Self, which requires absolute honesty. It involves listening to the inner true Self and aligning one's action with one's spiritual integrity. To Peale this means being on the golden beam. It means living one's truth; as Snyder says, "being an integrity."

Growing in knowledge of the true spiritual Self, and honoring the essential truth of one's being is the interviewees' pathway to the maturation of love and authentic life.

The true Self is known by honesty and authenticity, and the human task is to realize the full state of the true Self in concrete life as well as in subjective experience. This requires bringing into congruent alignment the outer personality, the inner Self, and the Divine Principle of Life. The state of congruent alignment is the state of wholeness in which unconditional, universal love is expressed. The critical factor for an individual is to distinguish between the inauthentic self and the authentic Self. As one interviewee explains it, the better she learns to hear the inner voice of her essential being and to honor that voice, the closer her worldly identity and her essential Self harmonize, eventually becoming interchangeable. "What is the choice of my high Self is spontaneously the choice of my worldly identity. Each informs the other." This seems to be an ultimate developmental state.

Bloomfield speaks of love as reciprocal, and of the necessity of learning to receive love. Keating experiences that the ability to love is strengthened by bringing to consciousness the blocks that inhibit the full expression of Divine Love. Kelsey believes that the essence of sin is unconsciousness, that human beings with the gift of reflection should have a thoughtful life's journey. He uses a journal for self-analysis and knowledge, and they record his pain, joy, inspiration and goals. Fairchild has grown in Self-knowledge through cognitive therapy and prayer. For De Tiger, practice toward maturity in love is to learn to honor her inner knowledge, to live in authenticity and truth, because love that flows from this inner truth has the power of

integrity. Her goal is to incarnate, to embody and to give expression to her spiritual Self. Keating has found the practice of meditative silence a way of distancing from his self-image and opening to God's presence. He advocates the discipline of unconditional acceptance of others with all of their idiosyncracies, and humble acceptance of himself. Slavik uses her Jungian training for self-understanding and expands her spiritual life through meditation and the inspiration of a spiritual guide, allowing others "to be" without manipulation and control. This, and following her inner guide, are further ways to grow in love. Snyder believes that to grow in love, he must develop a sense of aliveness, discovering the adventure of life, learning to celebrate life, to nurture the self, to share the authentic self with another. Hassel has experienced growing through self-knowledge, saying that "through the experience of our own defects, we grow in compassion for each other." He also stresses the need to learn to express love as a way of intimacy. Wise says that "life becomes a meditation of being true to yourself." For May, growing in love means growing in relationship with God.

Maturation Through Grace

For Fairchild, human love apart from God is incomplete and seeks its own way. For Douglas Steere, love flows from an eternal source and that love is possible only to the degree that the inner heart is open. Cobb feels that all love regardless of its humanness is connected to the Divine Source, but that the love of Corinthians 13 is not under human control. To love as in Corinthians 13, one needs to get out

of the way, give up the need to be self-controlled, self-determined, self-possessing, and to "trust the immediate presence of Grace. Love comes in ways that it does not come for those who need to control." De Tiger describes opening to the universal love that brings harmony, peace, a sense of being right with oneself. Peale says that as a person opens, lets go, accepts helplessness, he or she "gets on the Lord's great love beam." Galloway experiences that as human love is infused with Divine Love, human love becomes more giving, receptive, spontaneous, tender, appreciative, joyful. For Vettese, Divine Love permeates all creation and the process of purification involves surrendering into that love. Peale sees the human person as potentially a radiant center of God's love. May says to grow in love "requires a sacrifice of the autonomous self."⁷

Contemplations on Concepts of Love

Re-examining Self-love

According to all the interviewees, growing in self-love is also essential to loving others. If religious education is to assist persons in authentic life and the growth of self-love and love of others, it will be necessary to examine the meanings of selfishness, self-love and selflessness. Self-love has generally been disapproved by religious tradition. This disapproval of self-love is problematic and is due to misunderstanding. Self-love and selfishness can be very different. Selfishness is

⁷ Gerald May, Will and Spirit, 169.

characterized by manipulating and using people, having little or no concern for their welfare. In selfishness, every situation is appraised according to its value to the ego-self.

Selfishness is an ego-centric state in which priority is given the ego, regardless of the needs of others. In the state of selfishness, a person is self-seeking, self-indulgent, self-centered. Apparently opposite to selfishness is immature selflessness, the denial of the Self as a valuable, precious being with needs to be recognized and nourished. The Self is judged inferior and is denigrated and disowned. The consequences for disavowing the Self can include inner frustration and conflict, negative martyrdom, anger, inferiority and powerlessness. Fromm,⁸ Maslow⁹ and Rogers¹⁰ discuss the correlation between low self-esteem or immature selflessness and the inability to love others. In a mature selflessness, the ego-self has been integrated and transcended, and the needs and motivations of the ego-self have evolved from exclusively serving the self to serving others. In maturity, honoring the Self is tempered and integrated with the needs and desires of others. In mature selflessness, the Self is strong and able consciously to transcend itself in order to give to another. In this giving, there is no sense of loss of Self.

Self-love also has a range, from the most immature, self-centered state in which others are valuable only to the extent that they serve the self, to the more

⁸ Eric Fromm, "Selfishness and Self-love," Journal for the Study of Interpersonal Processes 2 (1939): 507-23.

⁹ Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, 121-60.

¹⁰ Rogers, "A Theory of Therapy," 184-256.

mature states in which the Self is known to have intrinsic value, is held to be precious and is heard with respect. In such Self-love, others are not seen as instruments to use, but as valuable persons to nurture. The motivations of mature Self love seek not to serve exclusively the Self, but also to care for and to love others. In maturity, selfless giving to others becomes a way to expand and develop the Self.

Curiously, as recently as 1961, Webster does not differentiate between mature and healthy self-love and immature, unhealthy self-love. Webster defines self-love as "peevish, proud, idle, love directed toward oneself rather than toward others; self-love as a consequence of failure to make satisfactory attachments to others."¹¹ The 1971 Webster's Thesaurus lists the synonyms of self-love as vanity, conceit, self-esteem, arrogance, egotism.¹² With such basic misunderstandings reflected in the culture, it is hardly surprising that religious tradition has taken such a dim view of self-love. Some religions have taught that the self must be annihilated in order to empty the inner being for the inflow of Divine Love. Christian ascetics have often adopted the approach of self-mutilation and self-denial. This study strongly suggests that to crush the inner true Self is to violate the maturation process. As people mature, they outgrow the self-centered, selfish state of immature self-love, and the self-centered self gradually acquiesces to governing by the true Self.

¹¹ "Self-love," Webster's Third New International Dictionary.

¹² "Self-love," Webster's New World Thesaurus, prep. by Charlton Laird (N.p.: Collins World, 1971).

Re-examining the Different Forms of Love

Chapter 1 briefly discusses the different forms of human love such as narcissistic, eros, filial and agapic that were identified in ancient Greece. The interviewees offer insight into how these forms change as love matures into the upper reaches. Following is a synthesis of this information.

In maturation, narcissistic, self-centered love is transformed into respect and compassion for the Self, a realization of the Self as a gift of the Divine, an acceptance of the stewardship for the Self. To see Self-love as narcissistic is to deny the trust, covenant, stewardship given by God. Learning to know the Self, getting in touch with its deepest nature, listening to the true Self's inner voice is critical to the growth of love. The old spiritual understanding of denial and repression of the self is not the answer. Nurturing, valuing and loving the self that it may transcend its purely human capacities and become a channel for Divine Love is the task. As the Divine touches the ego-centric self, the process of transformation begins and the self gradually turns from self-absorption toward the loving perception of others. As the caterpillar dies in its transformation into the butterfly, so the self-serving self dies in its transformation into loving being. The new Self is open, receptive to and transmittive of Divine Love. The way of love is a process, a lifetime of transformation. First one moment, then another, and like putting the dyed cloth in the sun in India until it fades no more, love gradually becomes love-fast. In the maturation process, the immature narcissistic, filial, erotic love of the self-serving self

is gradually infused with Divine Love and transformed into unconditional agapic love for the Self, others and God.

During the maturation process, the more human forms of love such as narcissism, eros and filial love become attuned with Divine Love. As the alignment of the Self and the Divine Principle is realized, the artificial boundaries of the different forms of love are eliminated. Erotic love that is infiltrated with Divine Love is a creative passion for life and an enlivened desire to create beauty, goodness and justice. In its more mature state, eros seeks to unify that which is divided, to bring the separated together in love. Sensuality is integrated into the whole, giving warmth, radiance, effervescence to the life experience. Sexuality between the male and female becomes a holy sacrament in which tenderness, commitment, trust and openness prevail. Sexuality for the celibate is expressed in tenderness and commitment to the chosen love. Eros, which expresses Divine Love, is steadfast and enduring through pain, disappointment and hardship, vibrant with life, strong in the face of adversity. Matured eros is anything but the caricature of incipient cupidity in an immature cupid. Mature eros is Divine Love expressing itself in the creative process of life.

Filial love, which in its more immature states is characterized by self-serving motivation, as it matures and is infiltrated with Divine Love, becomes less manipulative. In mature filial love, love is given freely to the other; there is an active concern for the well-being of the other, a willingness to sacrifice, if necessary, for his/her welfare. As filial love develops into the brotherly and sisterly love of the New

Testament, it extends to the poor, the sick and the weak. Concern for the other is not superficial charity based on self-needs, but is a genuine empathy and tender compassion for the full life expression of the other.

Love in the Upper Reaches: A Different Quality of Love

As pointed out previously, this study has been an investigation into the personal, subjective side of human life for the purpose of learning more about the changes of inward states of consciousness and experience as people grow toward love in the upper reaches. The second reason for this inward exploration is the belief of the investigator that outward states of manifest expression are limited by interior states of development. When a person attempts to cover feelings of anger or resentment, others are aware on some intuitive level that the love expressed is not coming from the Center of truth. Love is diminished by inauthenticity and control. When humans try to love, the love is qualitatively different from the occasions when people let go and let Grace love through them. Cobb expresses this well when he says, "I can take control of myself in such a way that I will refrain from doing injury to a neighbor and will distribute goods fairly and so forth, but there is a difference between this love and the love of Corinthians 1, 13, which is not under human control."

Vettese also describes feeling a strong force of love surrounding her in peak moments, and when she surrenders to that love she experiences herself as pure love. She shares that "when I completely surrender myself to this love, every fiber of my

existence awakens. The calling is to be more and more of myself and to live the love that I am."

Most human persons have experienced "trying to love" and understand the difference between love in pretense and love in truth. Nesbitt describes spontaneous love welling up when she watches a beloved grandchild in play. This love asks for no return except the moment of blissful attentiveness; in this moment love transcends the self in seeing the other and a person feels unconditional appreciation. In such moments Nesbitt experiences the truth of herself as a loving being. In such moments she is complete, at one with herself, the other, God. This is a moment of truth, authenticity, immediacy, purity. This love that deeply touches the heart is a gift of Grace. This is love in the upper reaches.

The analyst speculates that love in the upper reaches is more purely Divine and qualitatively different from love in the lower reaches. Such love has a profound effect on the persons who receive its expression. The grandchild who looks up to see her grandmother's gaze feels in her depths the truth of love, and by this moment of pure love, she is validated as a being of love.

Love as a Foundational Subject for Religious Education

This study concludes with the questions: What do these preliminary findings have to offer religious education? Do these preliminary findings that persons not only can mature in their ability to love, but that they can consciously contribute to the

process of maturation in themselves and others, have significance for religious education? The case is argued in earlier chapters that love is essential to the fullness of human life and that knowledge of love and its maturation is a primary need within our love-starved world. Although the findings of this study are preliminary and can only provide a beginning, the insights extracted from the living experience of interviewees, the literature and the research analysis are offered to religious education for consideration and study. The hope here is that the sketchy proposals will stimulate others to offer their creativity and their dedication to enhancing the human expression of love in the upper reaches.

Suggestions for Educating Toward Love

Boldly stated, the conclusion drawn from this study is that love should be the fundamental subject of all religious education. Love is a subject of universal concern, and yet far too little attention is given to its growth and full expression in human life. Education could stimulate interest and desire by describing characteristics of love in the upper reaches, and providing practical steps that could be taken toward growing in such love. The suggestion is made earlier that people do not know how to grow more loving and do not have a vision of mature, unconditional and life-affirming love. Many persons do not differentiate between immature, ego-centric love and self-transcending love in the upper reaches. Lifting conscious awareness of the range of love from its most immature states of ego-centricity to the more mature states of ego-

transcendence can provide a vision of possibilities. A vision of possibilities can become a goal by which to set the compass of human aspiration. Without a clear vision and the hope of its attainment, progress is often inept and uncertain.

Envisioning the possibilities for educating toward love includes developing comprehensive life courses beginning in early childhood and continuing into late age. In these life courses love is not a superficial motto for the year, but is a central and foundational intent for a lifetime. A true education on the living of love would take a lifetime since the potential for loving is ever-expanding as new knowledge comes forth. The courses would emphasize the living experience of intellectual concepts. People would not just read and talk about a concept such as forgiveness, but would experience what forgiveness feels like and means to them in their lives.

Developing such a comprehensive approach would require the help of very loving persons, such as the interviewees who are dedicated to love, to design and bring forth such a program. Such an educational program would need people who have come face to face with their inner demons, who know what it means to explore the inner depths of the human psyche, to suffer the pain of self-revelation, to ask in humility and surrender for help from the Divine Principle of Life, and to accept the life-giving power of forgiveness and love.

The following proposed educational model for the maturation of love draws on the experience of the interviewees and the theoretical conclusions of the author. This educational model addresses the whole person: mind, body, emotion and spirit living within a constantly changing social and physical environment. The inner and

outer dimensions of human reality are honored. Inner communion with the Divine through contemplative prayer is encouraged as a basis for action in the outer material dimension of reality. Opportunities for growth in self-understanding are provided.

Religious education can also assist persons to learn the value of self-love. As persons learn of their inner inhibitions to self-love, they are able to reassess and in many cases to transcend these inhibitions. Raising human consciousness to recognize the violation of love by sacrificing the true Self to convention or social and cultural controls, assists persons to honor the integrity of the true Self. Helping persons recognize hidden feelings of anger, guilt, inferiority and grief, and providing tools for overcoming such hindrances to love, enable growth in the ability to love.

Classes in developing the mind through positive thinking, imaging, creative endeavors, would be offered. Classes oriented to physical health, nutrition and exercise would also be encouraged. Consciousness-raising speakers would be invited to speak on social issues. Knowledge of sociological and psychological research would be utilized to invigorate the learning experience. The religious tradition would be valued and taught, the Story told. Scripture study, prayer and meditation would be foundational. Dependence on the Divine Transcendent would be central. Classes for all age groups would be geared to making the Story alive, real and immediate.

The instructional model of James Michael Lee lends itself to be a model of a love pedagogy. His process aims to: (1) provide cognitive understanding by intellectual knowledge; (2) enhance or modify affective behavior by exposure to new values and attitudes; (3) integrate cognitive and affective learning into a more holistic

experience of the inner, outer God realities; and (4) assist the on-going revelational experience through interpersonal communion with fellow persons and with God.¹³ Lee advocates a learning environment that facilitates cognitive, affective and conative functions so that the meaning of what the learner is experiencing is heightened, and the learner can come into deeper contact with the immanent God. The desired outcome is the "amalgam of knowledge, love and action fused into a behavioral lifestyle."¹⁴

A common belief of the interviewees is that unconditional love is a gift of Grace, and that although they can prepare the ground for planting, it is God who does the growing. Therefore, this educational model is based on the faith that where hearts hunger to love more truly, God will be present to lead the way. The four basic cornerstones of this method are: (1) meditative prayer and communion with God; (2) Self-understanding and authentic experience; (3) cognitive learning of religious traditions; and (4) living love in community life.

Cornerstone I--Meditative Prayer

The model proposed here aims to develop the human potentialities for mature love, the spiritual potentialities for communion with God, and the social potentialities for expression of justice, freedom and peace. This model borrows from Wesley the

¹³ James Michael Lee, The Shape of Religious Instruction, A Social Science Approach (New Haven: Religious Education Press, 1971), 63f.

¹⁴ Lee, The Shape of Religious Instruction, 312.

concepts of spiritual disciplines of prayer several times a day and of groups for sharing, witnessing, service and mission in the world. Regular classes would be offered in the many types of prayer, the way of silence, contemplation and inner listening. Spiritual retreats would be for the purpose of centering on the Spirit, relaxing, opening to Ultimate Reality.

May has been instrumental in implementing an educational model that places an equal emphasis on inner and outer learning. All of the interviewees reported some form of inner meditative or prayer practice. May, a psychotherapist, has come to realize, as a result of his work, that "neither psycho-therapy, social work or will power" can bring one to a spiritual grounding that makes "living a beautiful, awesome and incredibly simple process."¹⁵ He has discovered that those who experience a moment of being touched by God find a peace, a sense of being alive. From this he recognizes the value of spiritual experience. Together with Tilden Edwards, an Episcopalian priest, and others, he began Shalem, the Institute for Spiritual Formation in Washington, D.C. The Institute trains leaders for spiritual formation through a three-year program. An important part of the program is learning contemplative practices that lead to an inner state of expanded consciousness. May says that this state is similar to the kind of awareness called samadhi or satori.¹⁶ In his book Pilgrimage Home, May discusses the methods and the program for spiritual formation. "One of the goals resulting from contemplative practices is for every

¹⁵ Gerald May, Pilgrimage Home, 8.

¹⁶ May, Will and Spirit, 25.

behavior, every moment, every thought to become an act of prayer."¹⁷ Attentiveness to the moment deepens one's appreciation of life and one's ability to love.

Keating also teaches the value of contemplative prayer, that he says is "a process of interior transformation, a conversation initiated by God and leading, if we consent to divine union Though this process a restructuring of consciousness takes place which empowers one to perceive, relate and respond with increasing sensitivity to the divine presence in, through, and beyond everything that exists."¹⁸ This Keating calls spiritual attentiveness. Contemplative prayer gradually reveals the dark side of one's personality and the influence of the inhibiting psychological programs and patterns of the false self are erased and replaced.¹⁹ Keating believes that the process of prayer and self-knowledge deepens one's ability to love.

Kelsey is another interviewee who teaches that meditation is integral to spiritual life and love. He says that the flowering of the human soul is more a matter of the proper psychological and spiritual environment than of particular gifts, or disposition or heroism. "Meditation attempts to provide the soul with a proper environment in which to grow and become."²⁰ He explains that "love is not created by one's own effort. It happens when a person allows the love discovered inwardly, through meditation and ritual, to pour out through life in action." He describes this

¹⁷ Gerald May, Pilgrimage Home, 140.

¹⁸ Keating, Open Mind, Open Heart, 4.

¹⁹ Keating, Open Mind, Open Heart, 17.

²⁰ Kelsey, The Other Side of Silence, 31.

as "allowing love to work through us,"²¹ and it is very different from forcing love from one's own efforts. "Unless we first find the reality of the other who gives love, our attempts to imitate it are often self-seeking, shallow and ego-centric."²²

Bloomfield, also a psychiatrist, believes meditation opens the inner consciousness to a love that transcends one's humanness. Through meditation, one can tap into a profound level of love, which is then expressed increasingly in one's relationships and life. Through the process, one becomes aware of one's human limitations in receiving this love, and gradually through awareness the blocks and fears can be removed. Bloomfield speaks of becoming a channel through which love can be expressed to others.

For Hassel, prayer is central to spiritual life and to love. In his work he writes and teaches the value of different kinds of prayers. He distinguishes between active prayer, which is "a stretching out to others and to God in others," and passive prayer, which is a "sinking into one's inner depths to find God."²³ In passive prayer, a person becomes more present to self and to God, but paradoxically, when active in the world, the person is more actively present. As one sinks into one's inner depths, allowing God to direct as God wills, a person gradually "becomes more whole out of his or her contact with Wisdom Itself," and is hence more able "to produce more

²¹ Kelsey, The Other Side of Silence, 63.

²² Kelsey, The Other Side of Silence, 63.

²³ Hassel, Radical Prayer, 84.

wholesome actions for healing and promoting the world's wholesomeness, its full beauty."²⁴

This basic understanding of opening one's inner depths to the Divine in order to be prepared for action in the world is a common theme among the interviewees. Dorothy and Douglas Steere make silence and prayer the center of their lives. As Douglas Steere explains, "The holiness of every life relationship is intimately connected with the inward experience of communion."²⁵ Other interviewees, Vettese and Nesbitt, describe deep meditative experiences of expanded awareness in which they feel expanded beyond themselves into the wholeness of all creation. May calls this loss of self-definition, a unitive experience that is universal among cultures and is the fundamental experience of consciousness, mystery and being.²⁶

In consideration of the interviewees' experiences of the value of meditative prayer, one important part of a suggested educative model for love would include the teaching of different forms of meditative prayer in order that persons might experience the different states of inner consciousness. From this knowledge a person could choose the most comfortable type of meditative prayer.

²⁴ Hassel, Radical Prayer, 94.

²⁵ Douglas Steere, Quaker Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 18.

²⁶ May, Will and Spirit, 53.

Cornerstone II--Self-Understanding

The second structured part of an educational program toward love is self-understanding, which includes not only honest appraisal of talents, gifts, abilities and knowledge of the center of Truth, but also honest appraisal of those inhibiting factors of love.

The interviewees discuss their need for honest acceptance and analysis of the hidden, shadow side of their inner psyche, as well as acceptance of their essential truth and goodness. The value of self-understanding and self-forgiveness for their weaknesses and failures is seen as essential to the maturation of love. Religious education could encourage persons to look honestly within, without succumbing to debilitating self-judgment or to the fear of what might be discovered. Integration of the shadow side of the psyche, for most of the interviewees, is a prerequisite to authentic life lived from the spiritual Center.

As discussed earlier, the process of self-understanding on the deeper levels beyond human consciousness is nurtured by the Divine Therapist. What is beyond revelation in the therapeutic setting of conscious analysis is gently and gradually revealed by Divine Enlightenment. The process of personal dedication to inner truth, together with openness to Divine revelation, is, according to these exemplars, the pathway to growing in love. Religious education is challenged to develop learning programs that will gently assist a person in his/her journey to know the self. Scott Peck's The Road Less Traveled has been adapted into a meaningful course for

spiritual growth by Alice and Walden Howard.²⁷ The spiritual growth course offered by the Institute for Spiritual Formation is another.²⁸ The Twelve Step programs of addictive groups offer this type of growth possibility. More courses need to be developed with the goal of freeing people from inner inhibitions so that they may love more fully from their authentic spiritual Center. Courses on growing in love should be developed for the seminary experience.

Religious educators could assist persons to see their essential, authentic Center and to learn to live from that Center. If the life experience of the persons studied here can give clues, then certainly one of the most important events in the maturation of love process is the movement of the operative authority from worldly domination to the spiritual Center. Some of the interviewees experience their love becoming more authentic as they are able to live from their Center of truth.

As described in Chapter 8, many of the interviewees express the need to honestly approach their psychological toxins and inhibitions and to grow in self-understanding. Therefore, a second structural part of an educative model for love would provide a safe environment for individuals to share and to grow in self-understanding. Small groups in which trust and support develop would provide a nurturing environment for such sharing. Hassel says in his interview that "if there is any way a program can teach how to love, it's searching for those hurts." He has

²⁷ Alice Howard and Walden Howard, Exploring the Road Less Traveled (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985).

²⁸ Courses in spiritual formation offered by Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, Mount St. Alban, Washington, D.C., 1973.

learned that as people are able to talk with those who truly listen, longtime pain, angers, grief, and guilt can be healed. From such a deep inner release a person can feel liberated and worthwhile. Persons experience through small group sharing that each person has hidden shadow parts which when brought to light can be integrated. Persons in small groups learn to listen to one another with empathetic caring and to experiment with taking risks. In such a setting, which Lee calls a laboratory, persons can learn to trust honesty and to express love. Hassel believes that growing in love means also learning to express love. Since many of the interviewees express the relationship among self-knowledge, honesty, authenticity and love, the small group is suggested as an environment for encouraging such growth. In addition, a journal is suggested as another valuable tool for gaining insight into deeper levels of the psyche. Kelsey particularly has made this tool important in his quest for self-knowledge.

The preceding brief outline is given in an effort to emphasize the need for religious education to address the whole person. Many people, and particularly adults, want to grow toward more and more actualization of their human possibilities in all dimensions of their being, from social/cultural to spiritual.

Love is expressed and lived in relationships in the outer dimension of life, but love is also experienced in the inner dimensions of life. Both the inner and the outer dimensions of reality are integral to human life and to human love. Because this is an investigation into subjective life, the insights are weighted on the side of inner experience. This subjective focus does not, however, devalue in any way the importance of love lived in culture and in history. Love that does not transcend the

individual, is not concerned with transforming injustices or caring for the sick, lonely or defeated is not love in the upper reaches as described by the interviewees. What seems to be offered by these interviewees is a balance between inner subjective and outer relational experience. May speaks of present centeredness, of self-examination and of solitude. "But the present moment needs to be recognized as the immediate manifestation of history, the self needs to be seen as one piece of humankind, and solitude must be understood as preparation for involvement."²⁹ All of the interviewees are involved in work dedicated to the enhancement of human life, through teaching, writing, counseling and sharing their life experience with others. Because the interviewees give importance to the inner dimensions of human life, a pedagogical system is recommended that provides not only for cognitive learning, but also for experiential learning.

Cornerstone III--Cognitive Learning of Religious Tradition

The third integral of a recommended educational model for love is knowledge or intellectual understanding. This involves teaching the rituals, symbols and Scriptures of the religious tradition. As knowledge expands, persons are often inspired to grow in new dimensions, to re-evaluate old concepts and values, to reach for new possibilities. Keating says that as knowledge of God grows, one has an increasing sense of God as infinite potentiality. This sense of God leads to humility, wonder, awe and right relationship to all reality. As persons are told the story of

²⁹ Gerald May, Pilgrimage Home, 3.

their tradition, their faith can deepen; as they learn more possibilities for receiving and giving love, their experience of love can grow. Human persons are limited by their awareness of possibilities, but once new possibilities are apparent, new goals can be set.

Peale discusses the power of the mind in his many books and in the interview. He believes in a deep human tendency to become precisely what one habitually imagines oneself to be. Negative mental pictures lead to negative results, and positive images produce positive results. Peale is convinced that there are both psychological and physical creative power in faith, and that this power depends upon the intensity of the belief in the individual.³⁰ A portion of the teaching in this educational model might be directed toward positive imaging, in which old inhibiting patterns of behavior are re-programmed.

Cornerstone IV--Living Love in Community

The fourth integral of this educational model is directed toward living love in community life. Persons learn by doing, and skills are strengthened through practice according to the interviewees. Persons using this model would learn new ways to express their love into the world. Through growth in self-understanding, they would better know their inherent talents and could then offer these to the wider community. Each person would be encouraged to love others by using intrinsic gifts and interests.

³⁰ Norman Vincent Peale, The True Joy of Positive Living: An Autobiography, Special ed. (Pawling, New York: Foundation for Christian Living, 1984), 271.

As Maslow says, too much emphasis in education is placed on degrees and credits rather than on wisdom, understanding and good judgment. "The 'learning of the heart' has been neglected."³¹ In this model of education, authenticity, integrity, self-respect and self-love would provide the basis for loving action in community life.

Conclusion

With reluctance, I present these final paragraphs to conclude this study. The subject of love is at once so vital to human life and yet so illusive to human understanding that its study warrants a lifetime of devotion. Each individual harbors, deep within, a knowing, or at least a hope, that love is the answer to human suffering, that love can reach out and warm lonely hearts and heal aching pain. Experience indicates that a type of love exists that is qualitatively different from that love which is experienced as normal human love. Perhaps it is felt only in one moment of an entire life, but even that one moment can light the recesses of the inner heart and urge one to seek more. Theological and spiritual writers tell of a love that when experienced, seems to give a person a sense of complete peace and well-being, a sense of the unity of all life and a sense of deep radiant joy. The interviewees of this study give glimpses of what it means to experience love maturing into the upper reaches of human possibility. As one contemplates the possibilities for human persons to grow in their ability to love, the vision of a peaceful and loving world does

³¹ Maslow, Motivation and Personality, 282.

not seem to be only a mirage on the horizon. What is needed is not more immature love given in superficial charity from an ego-centered place. What is needed is love radiating from the essential true Self, centered in and opened to Divine Love. This is the love that can transform a life and a world. That human love that is distanced from Divine Love, which is left in this immature state, will not accomplish the task nor realize the possibilities. The challenge for humankind is to explore new frontiers in the spiritual depths of human experience, to grow in tender compassionate love, to feel the rich experience of authentic life, to know the meaning of communion with a tree, with the holiness of another, with the Divine, to discover greater potentialities for living and loving from their Center of Divine Truth.

Reflecting on this three-year odyssey and coming to the concluding chapter, the writer reviews a kaleidoscopic memory of rich experiences. The hours spent with each interviewee have been precious, as have the hours spent digging into the depths of the transcripts. In this process, each interviewee has become a beloved friend, for one touches another deeply as life truths are shared. To say thank you is inadequate, but the hope is that others will benefit from the gifts given by these seasoned and generous hearts, that many may be inspired by their testimony to truth as the basis for love, that all involved may become more passionately dedicated to bringing forth love in its fullest measure. May God bless each on his/her life journey, and may the seeds that are sown, flower into expressions of Divine Love.

APPENDIX A

Biographies of Interviewees

HAROLD BLOOMFIELD, M.D. is a practicing psychiatrist, a popular leader of workshops worldwide and author of books including Inner Joy, Making Peace with Your Parents and How to Survive the Loss of a Love. He has extensive experience in inner states of consciousness through meditation. He received his psychiatric training at Yale University School of Medicine.

BROTHER JOHN joined the Taizé community in 1974. Since 1983 he has been living and working with a small group of Taizé brothers in the Hell's Kitchen area of central Manhattan. He is the author of The Pilgrim God: a Biblical Journey and The Way of the World: A New Testament Pilgrimage, published in 1990. He has traveled throughout North America and with other brothers he spends time each year at Taizé, France.

JOHN C. COBB, Jr., is Professor Emeritus of Theology at the School of Theology, Claremont, California, and Director of the Center for Process Studies at Claremont. He is also the author of Christ in a Pluralistic Age, God and the World, The Structure of Christian Existence, A Christian Natural Theology: Based on the Thought of Alfred North Whitehead and Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition (with David Ray Griffin).

ELEANOR DETIGER is a visionary who actively brings together world spiritual leaders in order to bring into dialogue these leaders on the subject of spiritual life in the material world. As the executive director of the DeTiger Foundation, she has supported research studies in the area of feminine spirituality and the feminine movement in the emerging age. She is a global organizer and is at the center of a worldwide network devoted to expanding spirituality in the world.

ROY W. FAIRCHILD, B.D., N.A., Ph.D., has been the John McLennan Professor of Education in Social Psychology at San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, California. Fairchild has served on the Doctoral Faculty of the Graduate Theological Union of Berkeley, California. He is a Presbyterian minister and a certified marriage, family and child counselor. He is the author of Christians and Families, The Waiting Game, and other books and articles.

KATHY GALLOWAY, an ordained minister is a rector of the Abbey on the Isle of Iona, Scotland. Iona is known throughout the world as a spiritual holy place to which thousands pilgrimage each year. The Abby welcomes these pilgrims to weekly conference programs and workshop services.

DAVID J. HASSEL, S.J., is research professor of philosophy at Loyola University in Chicago. He is an experienced spiritual director and the author of six books including Radical Prayer, Dark Intimacy and Searching the Limits of Love.

THOMAS KEATING, is a Cistercian Priest, monk and abbot. He presently resides at St. Benedict's Monastery, Snowmass, Colorado. Keating is one of the founders of the Centering Prayer Movement and of Contemplative Outreach. His previous books include Crisis of the Faith, Heart of the World, The Word Was Made Flesh and Open Mind, Open Heart.

MORTON KELSEY, is an Episcopal Priest, leader of spiritual retreats, counselor, and former professor at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of over twenty books including The Other Side of Silence, Psychology, Medicine and Christian Healing and The Journey to Fulfillment.

MARTIN MARTY is Fairfax M. Cohn Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Modern Christianity at the University of Chicago. He is author of over thirty-five books, including Christian Churches in the United States.

GERALD G. MAY, M.D., is a psychiatrist with a private practice in Columbia, Maryland. He has taught on the clinical and medical facilities of the Pennsylvania State University, Temple University and the University of Maryland. May has been personally and professionally interested in the relationship between psychology and spirituality for over a decade and much of his studying and writing has been in that field. May is the author of Care of Mind/Care of Spirit, Simply Sane, The Open Way, Pilgrimage Home and Will and Spirit. May is a member of Shalen, The Institute for Spiritual Formation, in Washington, D.C.

ARLENE NESBITT is a mystic who for many years has followed the guidance of her inner voice. Those who know her say that she epitomizes the individual living from the center of her inner truth. The challenges that she has met and faced have been the inward challenges. She resides in Iona, Scotland and produces pottery appreciated world-wide.

NORMAN VINCENT PEALE, is clergyman at Marble Collegiate Church, New York City and author of thirty-six books, one of which, The Power of Positive Thinking, was one of the most successful books ever published, has been translated into thirty languages with a sale of over 15 million copies worldwide. He is the co-editor and publisher of Guideposts, which has a circulation of 4½ million subscribers. Messages from Peale are mailed to over a million people monthly from the Foundation for Christian Living, Pauling, New York. Over 31 million copies of his inspirational booklets are distributed yearly. He is a popular speaker at national business, trade and sales conventions throughout the United States, Canada and abroad. He has received twenty-two honorary doctoral degrees and the Presidential Medal of Freedom presented by President Reagan.

JITKA SLAVIK, teaches psychology at the Institute for Applied Psychology in Zurich and is on the staff of the Jungian Institute in Zurich. She has been a Jungian analyst since 1985. She is a disciple of Daryai Lala Katur and her current teacher in India is Maharaj Eharan Singh. In addition, she has been working with patients in the area of female development and female identity.

DR. ROSS SNYDER is an explorer and changer. He asks deep questions and insists on equally deep answers. As professor of religious education at Chicago Theological Seminary, he pioneered new and unusual approaches that bring the individual into close contact with the realities of life and religion. Snyder has led workshops and conferences which have brought him recognition as one of the most influential and original teachers of our day. Snyder is the author of On Becoming Human, One People and Their Culture and Contemporary Celebration.

DOROTHY STEERE, educator, Quaker. Steere has practiced the Quaker approach to inner silence for almost sixty years.

DOUGLAS V. STEERE, a distinguished T. Wistar Brown Professor Emeritus from Haverford College, Pennsylvania. He is the author of more than a dozen books including Gleanings and Together in Solitude. He is a former president of the Friends Service Committee and a noted leader of the Quakers.

SIRAH VETTESE, Ph.D., is an author, lecturer and counselor. She has led many workshops in spiritual life, produced several tape recordings on spiritual meditation, and conducted seminars on "Healing Imagery," "Inner and Outer Beauty," and "Making Peace within Your Family."

ELIA WISE has a background in radio and television. She is a business entrepreneur and an author of spiritual writings, a lecturer and leader of spiritual workshops. From 1979-85 she served as Vice President and founding partner of Light Works Magic, a Warner Bros. affiliated television and film production company responsible for writing, directing or consulting television or film productions including Goodnight Beantown, Hart to Hart, Tenspeed and Brownshoe, Single Bars, Single Women, Mr. Merlin, One of a Kind, Mirrors and Space Camp. As an applied metaphysicist, she deals with discovery and comprehension of the invisible principles governing our visible and experiential world. She is currently working on a screenplay in addition to an educational work for the John F. Kennedy Center, and publishing a book, For Children Who Were Broken. Another book has been sold to G.P. Putnam Sons for publication in 1991.

APPENDIX B

Persons Consulted for Recommendations of Interviewees

1. Dr. Roy Fairchild, professor, Department of Spirituality, San Francisco Theological Seminary, author and counselor.
2. Dr. Gaye Swenson, Director, Carl Rogers Institute, La Jolla, California.
3. Dr. Rafael Sanchez, Executive Presbyter, San Diego, California Presbytery, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
4. Ms. Eleanor DeTiger, Chief Executive and Spiritual Director of the Tiger Trust, The Netherlands.
5. Dr. Mary Elizabeth Moore, professor of Theology and Christian Education, School of Theology at Claremont, California.
6. Mr. Norman Lear, philanthropist, writer, producer, Los Angeles, California.
7. Dr. Harold Bloomfield, psychiatrist, author, Director of the Institute of Holistic Health, Del Mar, California.

The following interviewees were selected on the basis of their writings which related to the subject being investigated.

1. David Hassel, Jesuit priest, research professor of philosophy at Loyola University, author of Searching the Outer Limits of Love, Healing the Ache of Alienation, Radical Prayer and other books.
2. Dr. Gerald May, psychiatrist, author of Will and Spirit, and Care of Mind/Care of Spirit, co-founder of Institute of Spiritual Formation, Washington, D.C.
3. Francis Baur, Franciscan priest, professor of philosophical theology at the Franciscan School of Theology and Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA, and author of Life in Abundance.
4. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, lecturer, New York, New York.

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Buscaglia, Leo F. Love. Thorofare, NJ: Charles Slack, 1972.

This book is Buscaglia's most meaningful statement on love. He believes that love is a learned emotional reaction, that one does not fall in love, but grows in love, that to know love one must live love in action. He holds that there are not different kinds of love, but only one kind. He does not discuss divine love, but describes love as trusting, patient, not the goal, but the process. Love is lived in the now and a love relationship leads one to oneself. This is not a scholarly, philosophical discussion of love, but the simple sharing of a person that sees love as the central meaning of life.

D'Arcy, Martin. The Mind and Heart of Love. Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1956.

D'Arcy discusses the place of reason and passion among the early Greeks and mystery religions. He details the history and meaning of eros and agape love, and questions Anders Nygren's separation of the two. He describes the law of the universe as the law of "Give and Take" and discusses the dialectical relationship between positive and negative, animus and anima, human and divine. The ultimate goal of the self is not to possess God but to belong to God. In divine love, the creature is lifted to a new degree of being. D'Arcy does not demean self-love, but says, "it is necessary for the splendor of our finite beauty." Every human person has the two loves, the feminine, which surrenders for the sake of the other and the male which seeks its own and possesses. "In God all is given without loss."

Edwards, Jonathan. Christian Love, As Manifested in the Heart and Life. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1874.

In this book, Edwards, one of America's greatest theologians, speaks of love as the sum of all virtue, of divine love which is of the Spirit, not being the same as human love. That love which is of God inspires and fills the human heart so that divine love is the expression toward God and all God's creation. The loving heart is a humble spirit, which tends to holy practice in life. This is an excellent book on the meaning of Christian love.

Fine, Reuben. The Meaning of Love in Human Experience. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1985.

The author's purpose is to examine love from a scientific point of view. It is a textbook written by a psychiatrist. He questions Christian love which he sees as demanding love for God and others, and yet splitting a person from him/herself in its denial of sexual love (275). He believes the command to love everybody is psychologically impossible. Freud proved that love and sexuality are closely allied. Fine discusses Freud's concepts of love in detail, and says that "Freud's work is an elaborate and profound discussion of the question of love"(293). Cultures can be divided into love or hate cultures

depending on which predominates. Our aim should be to improve the culture so that love can develop and grow. "Love goes through a developmental line, and its manifestations are different at different ages"(308). He describes romantic, parental, filial and religious love.

Harper, Michael. The Love Affair. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982.

Harper says that we must break through the "tinselled" thoughts about love and get down to the foundations. The principal argument here is "that the main reason there is an absence of true love in the world is because man has divided what God has united and tried to unite what God has divided"(22). The three divisions to be united are: God and love, God and man, God and nature. The two kinds to be divided are eros and agape.

Hassel, David. Searching the Limits of Love. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985.

This book explores the questions: Is other-centered love, which all crave to give and receive, possible? What are the mysteries underlying love which gives it its power? Can the human person love fully without the assistance of the absolute? Hassel states that other-centered love is based on a healthy self-love, yet subordinates the love to the beloved's good, and is always reciprocal. It requires the presence of the "Unchosen Absolute" (God), by which one goes beyond human love, that is, self-centered love. Each person has radical freedom to choose either self-centered or other-centered love. The Unchosen Absolute is unitive, compassionate, expanding human liberty and rendering human love eternal.

Johnson, Paul. Christian Love. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1946.

This book is a psychological study of Christian love, investigated from the perspective of interpersonal psychology. Self-love matures to turn outward to others and upward to God. Christian love aims to extend to ever-wider circles; mature love reaches to more persons. Johnson discusses the place of the family, the church, and the community in the maturation of Christian love.

Kagawa, Toyohiko. Love: The Law of Life. Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1929.

Kagawa describes the evolutionary development of the human species from the primitive states of being controlled by nature, to the state of mutual aid for mutual survival, to a higher form of care that expresses itself in care for the weaker. Finally, there is the awareness that love is the essence of the universe, that it is the unconscious Universal Will that causes the individual to love, that perfects the human heart, enabling it to love its enemies. Evolution is not just variation, selection, survival: it is "progressive entrance into an ever-expanding freedom." Growth is the gradual unfoldment of love.

Kenmare, Dallas. Love: The Unknown. London: Johnson Publications, 1962.

Kenmare says that the awakening of the spirit requires a dedication to

truth, to creative introspection, to truly knowing oneself. Love is the only answer for humankind; misunderstanding the true nature of love has led to our current human disaster. The ability to love is God's greatest gift. Kenmare points out that love is the basis of all beauty, art, meaning, and the only way of redemption for humankind.

Merton, Thomas. Love and Living. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979.

Merton says that the purpose of education is to define ourselves authentically, and that the fruit of education is "the activation of the inmost center"(9), and the path of freedom leads from being untrue to being true to ourself. Love is a completeness, a wholeness of life, and we can never be fully real until we love. True Christianity is a continuous rebirth in which the false and selfish ego is shed, and the spirit of love becomes more truly expressed.

Nygren, Anders. Agape and Eros Pts 1 and 2. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1931, 1939.

In this famous, definitive work, Nygren traces the history and meaning of Eros and Agape. Eros he defines as the human yearning for the Divine, but this is in contrast to the Agape love of the New Testament which is a whole-hearted surrender to God. Agape is a love that gives, Eros is a love that gets. Eros strives for what it lacks. Agape responds in gratitude for what it is given. The thesis of this book is that the two motifs can never be reconciled. In the self-centered state of Eros, a person cannot become what he/she is meant to be.

O'Neill, David. About Loving. Dayton, Ohio: Geo. Pflaum, 1966.

The questions posed in this book are: What does it mean to love? and How can I love more completely? O'Neill proposes that loving is the basic attitude of the whole self, that it is the central purpose of our life, that it involves trusting and daring, that in loving we discover ourselves. Mature love is a creative overflowing, but loving others requires that we love ourselves and accept our inner meaning.

Outka, Gene. Agape: An Ethical Analysis. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972.

This book is an inquiry into love as a normative ethical principle, the relation of self-love and justice, the relation of agape to utilitarianism, of eros to psychological egoism. It examines the thinking of influential thinkers such as D'Arcy, Kirkegaard, Niebuhr, Nygren and Barth, and analyzes their positions on equal self-regard, self-sacrifice, mutuality, virtue, grace and personal agency.

Sadler, William, Jr. Existence and Love: A New Approach in Existential Phenomenology. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1969.

Sadler writes, "With all of our scientific knowledge about human life we are still quite ignorant about love"(xi). This study attempts to integrate various disciplines within the perspective of love, and to give a vision of the human person in wholeness from the perspective of love. For him, a human being is actively engaged in his/her experience, as is an artist in his work. "The chief task of human life is to become personal, and the ground of personal existence is loving duality"(315).¹ Sadler discusses the meaning of love in stages on life's way, from the infant/mother relationship to the ultimate God-human relationship and he sees the "centrality of love in the whole course of existence toward its authentic destiny"(351).

Tavard, George. A Way of Love. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1977.

Tavard addresses the socio-political dimensions of Christian love and asks if it is ready to supplant the Marxist philosophy as the basic motivation for liberation from injustice and oppression. He discusses the ethical and moral understanding of Judaism as the love for God, and for God's people, and enmity for the enemies of God and Israel. It is through the person of Jesus Christ that the ethic of universal love arises, and one is to love one's enemies. Tavard believes that political love, that love which reaches out in friendship and compassion and is based on Christian love, is the hope of humankind. Political love is universal love seeking universal justice; it is transpolitical. "The Kingdom is not ahead of us in humanity's future. It is in God"(154).

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. On Love and Happiness. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1966. Teilhard, an evolutionist and theologian, holds that we have reached a critical point in the human evolutionary process, the point at which love becomes the "totalizing principle of human energy"(25). Love is the apex of all evolution. It is both the goal, the end, and the means. He views the growth of the human ability to love as bound up with the destiny of the universe. Teilhard says that "love is the most universal, the most tremendous and the most mysterious of the cosmic forces." He asks, "Is it truly possible for humanity to continue to live and grow without asking itself how much truth and energy it is losing by neglecting its incredible power of love?"

Tillich, Paul. Love, Power, Justice. New York: Oxford University Press, 1954.

Tillich denies that there are types of love such as eros and agape, but says there are different qualities present in each act of love. He examines the ontological meaning of love, power and justice. Love is not an emotion but "the moving power of life," the drive toward unity. He discusses epithymia (desire) eros (drive for union) philia (relationship) agape (depth) as the qualities of love. Justice is the power in which being actualizes itself, and power is that dynamic self-affirmation of life.

Wilhelmsen, Frederick. The Metaphysics of Love. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1962.

Wilhelmsen believes that there are two dimensions of human existence, the tragic and ecstatic, and that both exist to some degree in all persons. The human person is the expression of "being," and by opening to the richness of existence "permits all being to be its very fullness." Love is located in the very heart of being and is intensified by the deep sense of the tragic, without which love is sentimental and underdeveloped.

Williams, Daniel Day. The Spirit and the Forms of Love. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981.

Day seeks to analyze the forms of love, the meaning of the love of God, love as it is understood in terms of Christianity and in terms of the "process world view which encompasses evolution, development, growth, and becoming." He asks the question, "Is there a love other than man's and if so, what difference does it make?"(1). For him, love is not a static ideal but a creative power; it is spirit taking form in history, a creative becoming. Day discusses the historical models of love of Augustine, St. Francis of Assisi and Martin Luther, love between God and the human person, suffering and sin, sexuality and love, love and social justice. This is a basic text for scholars of love.